THE 50 HOTTEST NEW GUITARISTS * *as chosen by you!*

COLLECTOR'S COVERS 1 OF 4

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REMEMBER WHEN

LED ZEPPELIN
BRON-YR-AUR

YES
AMERICA (Part 1 of 2)

GRETA VAN FLEET

JAKE KISZKA

Plus

KIRK HAMMETT MAKES HIS SOLO DEBUT

THE NIGHT JUDAS PRIEST'S RICHIE FAULKNER ALMOST DIED

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NEAL SCHON

KING'S X

GRETCHEN MENN

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& MORE

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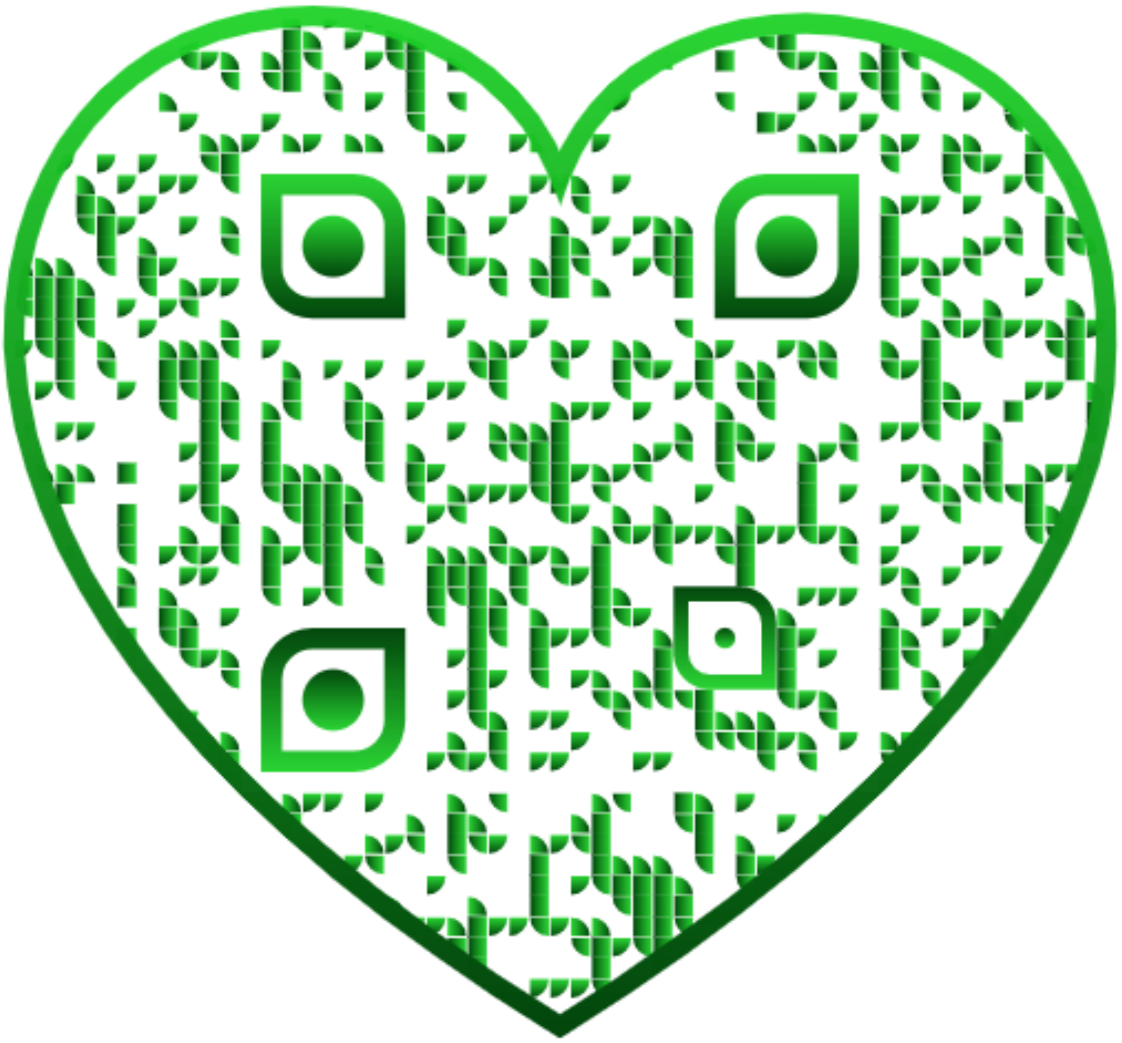

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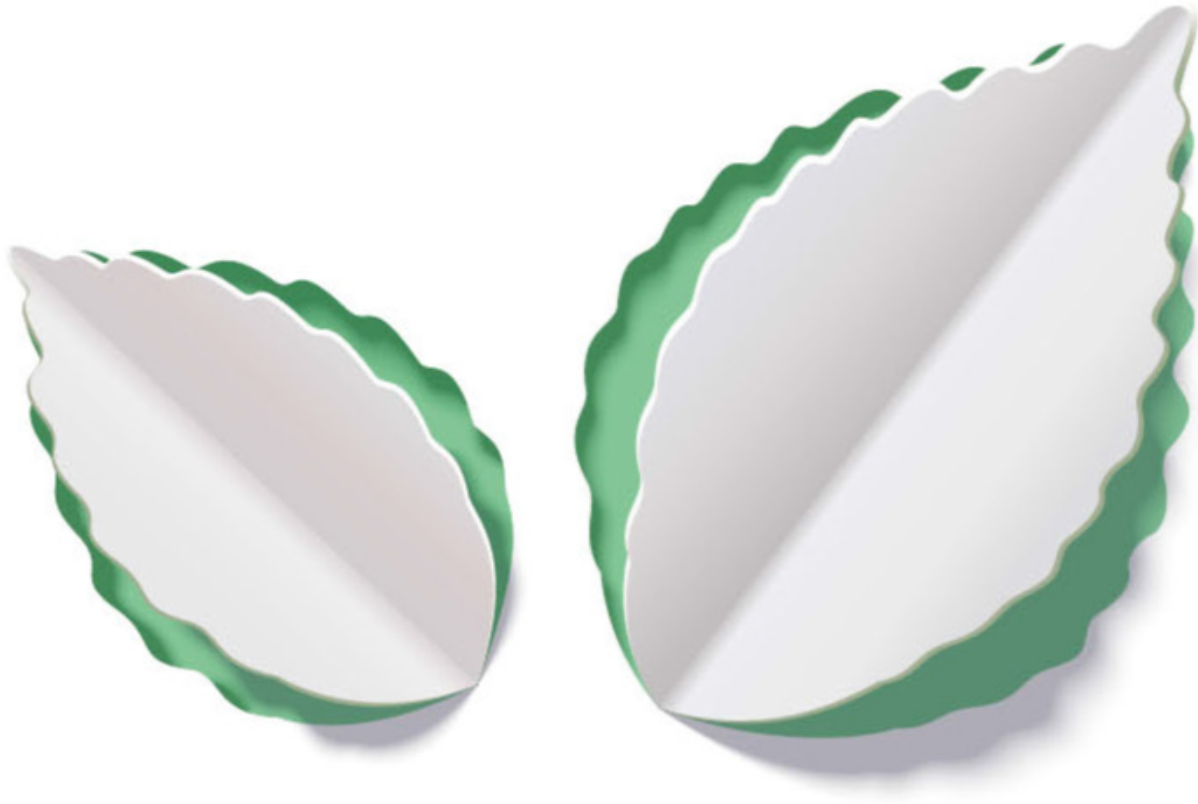

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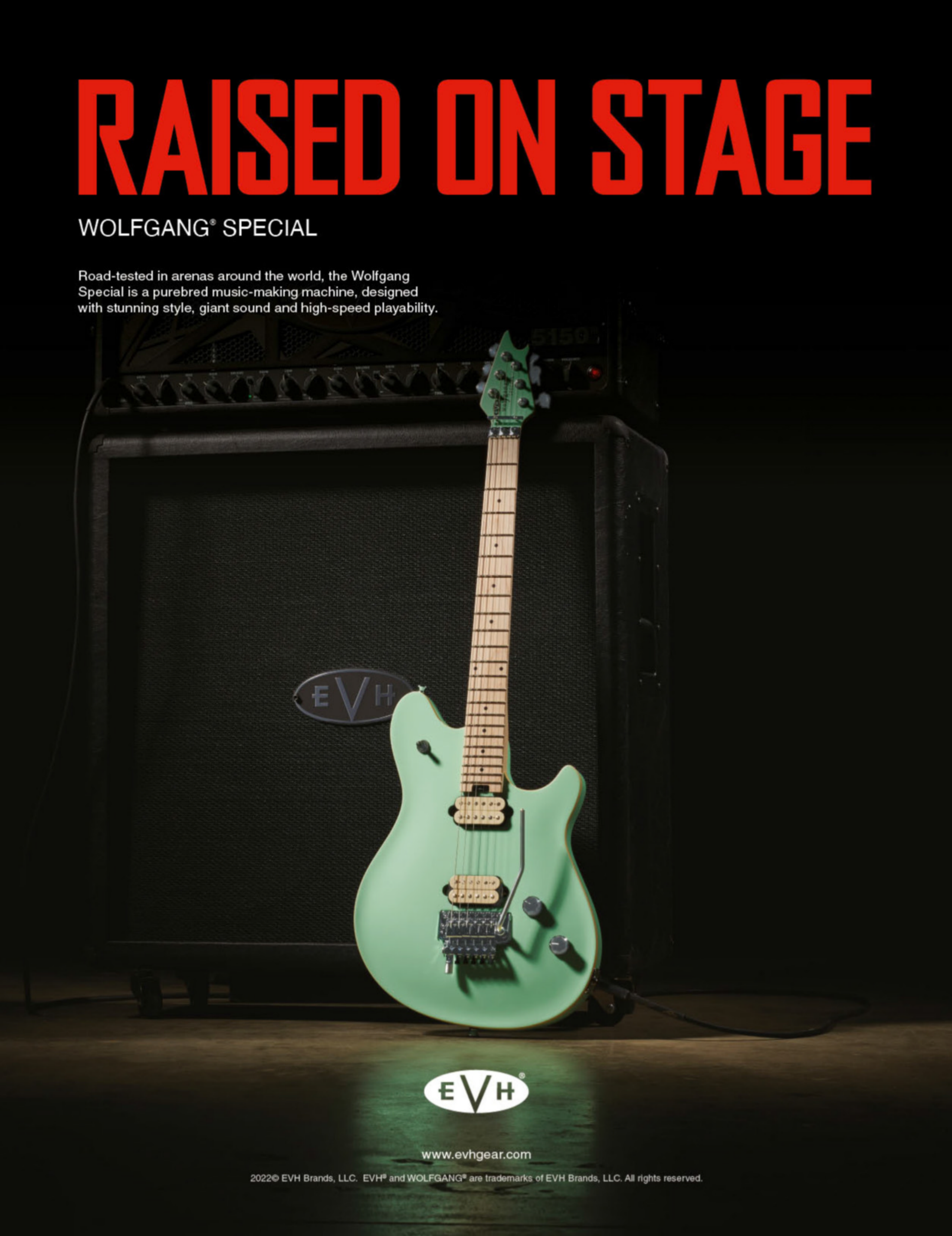

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JEN ROSENSTEIN

COVER PHOTOS: JEN ROSENSTEIN (CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM & GRETCHEN MENN) | PAIGE SARA (JAKE KISZKA) | JOSHUA BLACK WILKINS (BILLY STRINGS)

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WOODSHED

VOL. 43 | NO. 9 | SEPTEMBER 2022

FOUR COVERS!

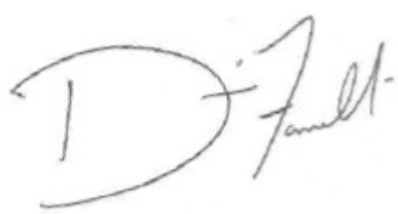
SO, AS PROMISED in last month's Woodshed, this issue — after two consecutive issues that focused on events that took place in the Eighties — is dedicated to players who (I assume, anyway — it's not like I have their passports) weren't even around in the Eighties. So if you're looking for your new favorite guitarist, this issue is a veritable smörgåsbord.

FOUR DIFFERENT COVERS: Take note of this issue's four different covers — Jake Kiszka (of Greta Van Fleet fame), Christone "Kingfish" Ingram (who's also the subject of his very own "in the style of" lesson), Billy Strings and Gretchen Menn.

WELCOME JOSH SMITH: Josh Smith, who is one hell of a blues player, is now a *GW* columnist, and you can check out his first installment on page 83.

FINE TUNING THE TUNE-UPS: This issue features a new Tune-Ups variation called Makin' Tracks (starring Journey's Neal Schon); I'm not sure if any of you will remember, but Makin' Tracks is an updated version of an old *GW* column called Hitmakers, the heyday of which was around 1998. Also, 60 Minutes (the old *GW* column, not Morley Safer and Andy Rooney) officially returns in the next issue!

A FEW CORRECTIONS: In our feature about Eighties gear [*August 2022*], we implied that Andy Summers used a Boss CE-2 — and also that he used chorus with the Police. In reality, he didn't use either (outside of incredibly rare occasions). The primary source of Summers' chorus effects on most Police recordings was an Electro-Harmonix Electric Mistress Flanger set to a chorus-like effect. While we're at it, the Mesa/Boogie Mark II came out in 1980, not 1984, and EMG pickups were introduced in the mid Seventies, not 1983. Meanwhile, Eddie Van Halen used Eventide rack units throughout the Eighties (mainly an H949), but he didn't use an H3000 until the *Balance* era (mid Nineties) — and Marshall introduced master-volume model amps as early as 1975 (Hiwatt also had master volume since the late Sixties). We apologize for the errors and the confusion they may have caused.



DAMIAN FANELLI
Editor-in-Chief

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GUITAR WORLD (ISSN 1045-6295) is published 13 times a year, monthly plus Holiday issue following December issue, by Future US, INC., 135 West 41st Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10036. Phone: 212.378.0400. Fax: 917.281.4704. Web Site: www.futureplc.com. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by CMG. Subscriptions: One-year basic rate (12 issues) US: $17.95. Canada: US$42.95. Foreign: US$42.95. Canadian and foreign orders must be prepaid. Canadian price includes postage and GST #R128220688. PMA #40612608. Subscriptions do not include newsstand specials. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Guitar World, P.O. Box 2024, Langhorne, PA 19047-9957. Ride-along enclosure in the following edition(s): None, Standard enclosure: None. Returns: Pitney Bowes, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2, Canada. Entire contents copyright 2022, Future PLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. Future PLC is not affiliated with the companies or products covered in Guitar World. Reproduction on the Internet of the articles and pictures in this magazine is illegal without the prior written consent of Guitar World. Products named in the pages of Guitar World are trademarks of their respective companies. PRODUCED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
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GUITAR WORLD EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING OFFICES
347 W. 36th St., 17th Floor/Penthouse, New York, NY 10018

FUTURE US, INC.
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I finally got my Dean ML!

I was recently reorganizing my back issues of *GW* and came across the first-ever subscription issue I recieved of *GW* — April 1994, with a badass cover photo of Dimebag Darrell and his even more badass Dean from Hell (a Tobacco burst Dean was on the back cover, BTW). Back then when an issue arrived, I'd devour it from cover to cover, re-read the interviews and try to memorize every song... but then, when my very excited young eyes stared at the end of the issue, the holy grail appeared: a sweepstakes to win a full stack *and* a Dean ML! I thought I'd never be able to have one of *those* guitars, but here was my chance, my opportunity! I didn't win the giveaway. Fast forward to 2022.

When I showed the magazine to my better half, she reminded me that a blue ML with a Floyd is my one "freebie" buy; if I find one, it can come home with me, no questions asked. The dream stayed in my heart, but I've not been able to find one (and you haven't given another one away). Then, literally two days after finding that issue, and probably 28 years to the day since I was tearing through those same pages of *GW* practicing Riffer Madness licks on a cheap SG clone, I walked into the music store — and there it was. I didn't have to think twice, and now an ML sits on my guitar wall of fame. So, thank you, *Guitar World*, for inspiring a kid with no money and no prayer at rocking out like Dime. I can finally say I have the "Gear I Want Most," but I'll still keep defending the faith with you all! Feel free to print this in an issue!

— Paul Speedy, Mifflin, Indiana

More Southern rock, please

I always enjoy each issue. But other than some Skynyrd, I've rarely seen much Southern rock [*in the magazine*]. I'm a big fan of the Marshall Tucker Band and would love to see "Cattle Drive" tabbed out within your pages. Plus it might be good for the soul to have some of the new generation hear that Carolina blues/jazz mix. While I'm at it, how about an article on the late Hughie Thomasson and the Outlaws? "Green Grass and High Tides" is what I want played at my "going out." Just a thought from this dusty old tramp. Thanks for your consideration.

— Larry "Mojo" Mosher

A fitting tribute to Eddie Van Halen

Thank you for honoring Eddie Van Halen in the most complete and fitting way in which you did [*January 2021*]. While other so-called "music" magazines fell short by barely or briefly mentioning his greatness and influence, I knew you'd come through and a proper and fitting celebration. Farewell to the king! Thank you, Eddie, and thank you, *GW*!

— Chad Thomas

Keep the hard stuff coming

First of all, I've finally completed acquiring every *Guitar World* issue from 1980 to 2022. It was a great journey for my obsessed *Guitar World* ass. Secondly, last month [*June 2022*] Bruce Bowling wrote in about you guys printing tabs that are too difficult, like Animals As Leaders. Although I respect Bruce's opinion, please print more hard transcriptions for people like me! There's nothing more exciting than tabs that challenge me in *GW* — and in your beautiful tab fonts. That's what made me finally write in. You must know there are other people that love those challenges. Please print a Jason Richardson tab next!

— Nicholas George

"We are from France"

I was thrilled to see Red Hot Chili Peppers' "Soul to Squeeze" in the March 2022 issue. But I thought you'd mention in the Performance Notes that the song was featured on the *Coneheads* soundtrack. It's not a big deal, but to me it helps you realize just how old the tune is! And the movie! [*1993*] Thanks.

— Ron Whitemyer

Part 1...

Tonal Recall was my favorite part of *GW*. Sorry to see it go.

— Guy Lee

... and the sequel!

I enjoyed the [*new*] Power Tools column. Keep rockin'!

— Guy Lee

Robert Fripp's "21st greatest" moment

I generally don't comment on "best of" lists, but I have to say I was surprised "Discipline: Robert Fripp's 20 Greatest Guitar Moments" [*April 2022*] didn't include a song that features some of Robert's greatest guest guitar moments: "Fade Away and Radiate" from Blondie's *Parallel Lines*. Fripp flavors the song dramatically end to end, then points the way out over a brittle, sultry-yet-futuristic, near-reggae outro. Rather than entwining his guitar in the typically thorny, complex structures of many King Crimson tracks, this track's backing is so basic that it acts as a stark pedestal that clearly presents Fripp's wildly inventive approaches. And he makes the most of it. Brilliant! So, can we make it his 21 greatest moments?

— Frank Moriarty

New music worthy of being tabbed

This is in response to the letter sent by Dennis [*April 2022*]. He says he's 56 and that "if *GW* didn't have articles about his favorite 'old timers,' he wouldn't be a nearly 30-year subscriber." I'm 62 and a 38-year subscriber and would like him to know there is room for both past and current music artists. To illustrate this, I'll list songs recorded since 2000 that I hope to see transcribed in *GW*. "Love So Deep" by Walter Trout; "Good Things Happen to Bad People" by Richard Thompson; "Burning Hell" and "Blues Deluxe" by Joe Bonamassa; "Boom, Like That" by Mark Knopfler; "Jenny Wren" by Paul McCartney; "Eddie's Gospel Groove" by Ronnie Earl; "Start a Band" by Brad Paisley and Keith Urban; and "Medicine at Midnight" by Foo Fighters. Check it out, Dennis. There are a lot of very talented people out there. A huge thank you to *GW* for all the tabs and columns. It's like having a guitar teacher on call 24/7.

— Mark Manzano

Time for some Kath?

I'm sure you get this a lot, but would you consider a piece on [*Chicago's*] Terry Kath? [*He was*] a great player and singer, overshadowed by a fantastic band and being such a team player!

— Cal Fynn

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OF THE MONTH

If you've created a drawing, painting or sketch of your favorite guitarist and would like to see it in an upcoming issue of *Guitar World*, email **GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com** with a scan of the image!

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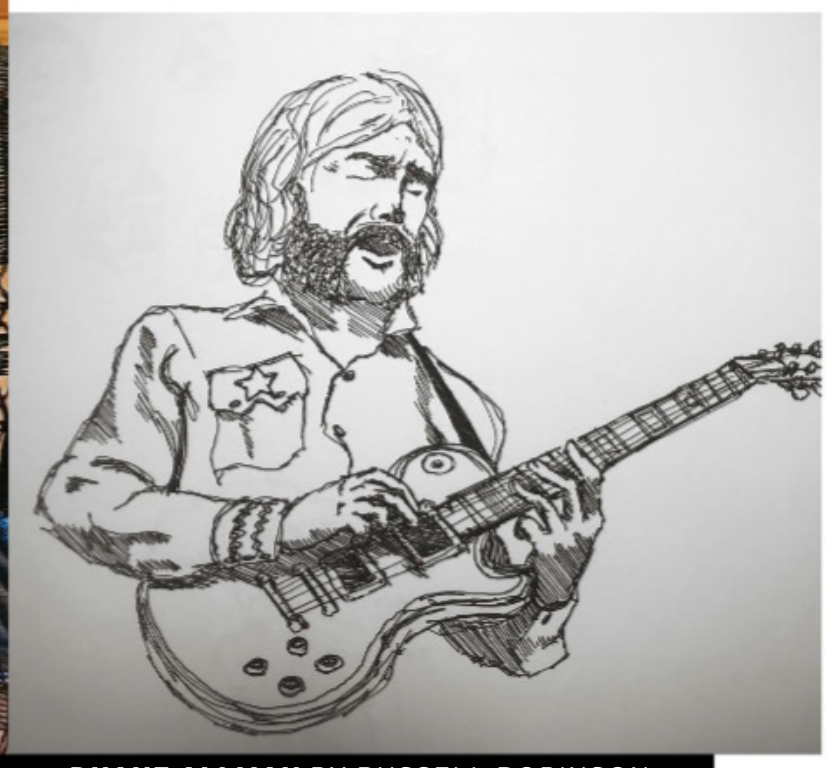
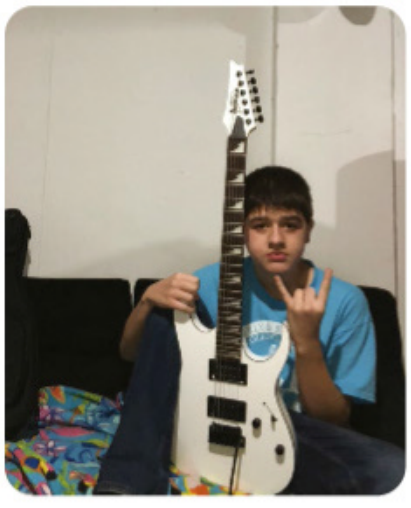


DUANE ALLMAN BY RUSSELL ROBINSON

DEFENDERS *of the Faith*



Jordan Toth

AGE: 16
LOCATION: Toledo, OH
GUITARS: Ibanez GRGR120EX
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Pantera "Walk" and "Cemetery Gates," Black Sabbath "Black Sabbath," Down "Losing All"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Dean Dimebag Darrell Signature Dean from Hell, Randall Warhead WH300, DigiTech Whammy pedal

Scott Kesler

AGE: 47
LOCATION: Wauseon, OH
GUITARS: Epiphone Les Paul Prophecy, Epi Blueshawk, Nineties Jackson Kelly, Gibson SG, etc.
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Alice in Chains "What the Hell Have I," Led Zeppelin "Over the Hills and Far Away," Leadbelly "The Pines" and originals by my band
GEAR I WANT MOST: How much space have you got? I have G.A.S. — Gibson J-45, Les Paul Goldtop with P90's, Axe-Fx II for my tamer gigs...

Yannick Ramanujam

AGE: 10
LOCATION: Newtown, PA
GUITARS: Cort CR100, called "Cortney"
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Chuck Berry "Johnny B. Goode," Jimi Hendrix "Hey Joe," Led Zeppelin "Stairway to Heaven," Scorpions "Rock You Like a Hurricane," Queen "Fat Bottomed Girls"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Gibson 1957 Les Paul Goldtop reissue or 60th Anniversary 1960 Gibson Les Paul Standard

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TUNE-UPS

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"I think the only way to truly make progress is to always move forward and not let anything stop you," Jared James Nichols says

Pure Jared James Nichols

THE LES PAUL-LOVING, WISCONSIN-BRED ROCKER HOPES THE WORLD IS READY FOR SOME FULL-TILT BLUES POWER

By Richard Bienstock

IF YOU'VE NEVER witnessed Jared James Nichols onstage, let us say right now: you're missing out, big time. Usually armed with little more than the heavily customized, even-more-heavily-worn Gibson Les Paul he nicknamed "Old Glory" (or, just as likely, one of his single-pickup Epiphone "Old Glory" and "Gold Glory" Les Paul signature models), the singer and guitarist practically strangles his instrument into submission (*sans* pick, of course), unleashing torrents of incendiary riffs and licks and ripping out howling, hotwire solos jam-packed with blazing note bursts, screaming, vocal-like bends and tasty, blues-drenched phrases.

It's a sight and sound to behold, and so when it came time to record his most recent EP, *Shadow Dancer*, Nichols decided to bring that live vibe right into the studio. "I've always been told, 'Man, you sound so much rawer in concert than on your records,' " Nichols tells *Guitar World*. Upon entering Blackbird Studio in Nashville with his power trio, he continues, "We said, 'Fuck it, let's break some necks. Let's play how we play. Let's see what happens.' We tracked everything live and straight to tape, including the solos — no click, no overdubs, except for my vocals. We turned everything up and left caution to the wind. It was like, 'Okay guys, tape's rolling, play one.' Then we'd take a deep breath and just go for it."

The result, he says, is "purely raw, unapologetically me: hard-hitting blues mixed with my love of heavy riffs, with grunge overtones." And indeed, one listen to the music — the unrelenting full-throttle chug of "Bad Roots"; the moody, darkly liquid strains of the title track; the anthemic swell of "Skin 'N Bone," the

PHOTO BY IMANI GIVERTZ

anguished, insistent grind of "Saint or Fool" — bears this out in spades, presenting Nichols at his most and primal, with his guitar work pushed to the max.

Just how much to the max? "When we were recording, our producer, Eddie Speer, said, 'Guys, this is the loudest record I've ever made,' " Nichols says with a laugh. "I'll tell you, we were in the room, and man, I swear I have hearing damage. I had a Blackstar Artisan 100 and a 1969 Marshall Super Lead 100, both running together and full-on. When I stood in my spot in front of the cabs, it was so loud I couldn't hear the drums. It was insane."

Guitar-wise, Nichols says he brought a mix of new and vintage Gibsons with him into the studio. "I had 'Ole Red,' which is my 1953 Les Paul Standard Goldtop that was over-sprayed in red, and has P-90s and a wrap tail bridge; my '56 Les Paul Junior, which is an unmodded, really killer single-pickup guitar, and my Gold Glory signature model," he says. The combination offered up a wide array of tones. "One thing that was cool with this recording is that the older guitars, the magnets in the pickups are so weak," he says. "When you hit them with those big, loud tube amps, it's incredible the way they react, the way they distort, the overtones you get — it's like nothing else. And then when I used Gold Glory, which you can hear on something like 'Bad Roots,' it's a newer guitar with a newer pickup, and it sounds so much brighter. It's a nice mix."

What you also get a nice mix of on *Shadow Dancer* is the many facets of Nichols' style. "The big thing for me in my evolution not only as a player but also as an artist is that I continually aspire to grow," he says. "And I think the only way to truly make progress is to always move forward and not let anything stop you. So with this batch of songs I got out of my own head and I stopped saying to myself, 'Jared, play blues,' or, 'Jared, do a shuffle like Stevie Ray.' At the end of the day, I had to just be myself and play whatever came out. I was left to my devices to say, 'I want to express the sound in my head in this power trio format. I love to play in this simple bass-drum-guitar-vocal style, so where can I take it and how can I do it in my own way?' So it's me exposing all the different shades and all of the different colors of my music and my inspiration, and delivering it with the energy and the overall sonics of a live experience."

As for that live experience, Nichols has of late been providing it out on the road as the opening act for Zakk Wylde and Black Label Society on their recent U.S. tour, something of a landmark moment for the 33-year-old from Waukesha, Wisconsin. "One of the first concerts I attended as a kid was Ozzfest," he says. "I was 14 and already in love with rock 'n' roll. A friend and I were determined to get as close to the stage as possible, and we ended up sneaking to the front row. I'll never forget the moment I first saw Zakk playing in the flesh with Ozzy — it was beyond powerful. I was mesmerized. I had yet to start playing guitar, but the moment I picked one up months later, I was already influenced and had a lifetime guitar hero in Zakk."

"Our producer said, 'Guys, this is the loudest record I've ever made' "

That Zakk Wylde inspiration is just another ingredient in the Jared James Nichols stew, demonstrating that, while he's often lauded for his searing blues chops, there's more to the musician than meets the eye. "There's still huge parts of me that are so rooted in playing that really lowdown blues," Nichols says. "But there's also so much more that I grew up listening to, from Black Sabbath and Mountain to grunge to some funky stuff, all of which you can hear on the record. Really, my biggest goal with all of this was to just be me, and to open up and say, 'This is what I'm feeling, this is what I'm digging, let's see if we can make it work.' It was a beautiful experience. And the coolest part is when you listen to the EP, you'll hear it exactly as it was laid down. There's no trickery."

And there's plenty more where that came from. Even while Nichols continues to support *Shadow Dancer* on the road, he says there's more material coming — once again, live and direct — in the form of a full-length record. As for when we can expect that? "Early fall," Nichols says. "So get ready for full-tilt *blues power*!"

INTRODUCING

LilG
Seven Summer Stories *(LilG Records)*

SOUND This 10-year-old Australian — who was clearly inspired by the classic sounds of the Ventures, Shadows and their ilk — has got the clean Strat sound nailed perfectly, not to mention an ultra-cool retro look. Although she has only three years of playing under her belt, her debut album showcases chops, taste and technical ability well beyond her years.
KEY TRACK "Guitar Boogie"

Faz Waltz
On the Ball *(Spaghetty West)*

SOUND This Italian three-piece summons the spirit of Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran, filtered through a Seventies U.K. glam-rock prism. The result is an unpretentious, hard-hitting set of rockers that celebrate the joyous, good-time vibe of classic rock 'n' roll — short, adrenaline-surging slabs of instant-hit satisfaction, with incisive solos that cut to the chase every time.
KEY TRACK "Hot Cold Fever"

Bridear
Aegis of Athena *(Setsuzoku Records)*

SOUND The juxtaposition of metal with commercial pop makes for a surprisingly effective sound — which is way more than the sum of its parts from this on-the-rise band from Japan. Two guitarists share a ton of shred-worthy ax work, with plenty of juddering, stop-time rhythms, topped off with memorable choruses.
KEY TRACK "Ray of Chaos"

— Mark McStea

LILG: GREG FISHER FAZ WALTZ: CRISTIAN OSDE BENZONI BRIDEAR: PROVIDED/PR

INQUIRER
JESSE DAYTON

THE WELL-TRAVELED SIDEMAN AND AMERICANA MAVERICK TALKS ROOTS — AND THE BENEFITS OF A TEXAS UPBRINGING

Q: What led you to guitar land?
Watching Chuck Berry on Johnny Carson's show when I was 10. Chuck was doing his duck walk — the coolest thing ever. My whole career has been having one foot in rock and one in country, and I feel Chuck just as much in both worlds.

Q: What was your first guitar?
I played a tennis racquet until I was 15, which is when I got my first guitar, a Silvertone archtop that had ridiculously high action; it was almost unplayable. All I could learn on it were bass lines, which I got from ZZ Top's ***Fandango***! Eventually I got a second-hand Alvarez at a garage sale.

Q: What's the first song you ever played?
I had met this older Black guy, Granville Cleveland, who I heard had played with Edgar and Johnny Winter's White Trash band. They were from my town — Beaumont, Texas. He taught me my first three songs, aka the three "Hey's" — "Hey, Good Lookin'" by Hank Williams, "Hey Hey, My My" by Neil Young and "Hey Joe" by Jimi Hendrix. I've basically been playing variations of those songs my entire life!

Q: Where was your first gig?
At high school. We played the Kinks' "All Day and All of the Night." It was full-on garage band style, and the chicks were digging it. Any guitar player who tells you they didn't get into a band to get the girls, well, I'd question that.

Q: What's your most embarrassing onstage moment?
My solo record, ***Raisin' Cain*** [1995], had just gone to Number 1 on the Americana charts. It was the first time I had played L.A. and there were all these people there to see me, including Quentin Tarantino. I tripped and fell on stage and my butt landed in the milk crate that was used to hold mic cables. It was literally stuck to my ass. Dave Alvin came on stage and pulled the milk crate off my ass. I just had to blow it off, man up and get through it.

Q: Any memorable studio stories?
I was in the studio with Waylon Jennings in L.A. He came in and hooked up this wah pedal and told me to "Make it funky, son!" and walked out. I ended up doing the lead on the song we were recording and used the wah-wah — and it was kind of out-of-left-field sounding. Later, when Waylon opened up for Metallica at Lollapalooza in 1996, James Hetfield told me it was his favorite lead that year.

"Don't worry about shredding and playing fast," Jesse Dayton says. "Concentrate on song arrangement and structure; it will help your playing in spades"

Q: What's your favorite piece of gear?
I have this '65 Fender Super Reverb Blackface amp. You can get everything from it, like Buck Owens to Stevie Ray Vaughan to Jimmy Page. At the moment I'm using these Orange TremLord 30s. I just got a deal with those guys in London and they're amazing. That's my favorite new amp — the best of what's out there now.

Q: Any advice for new players?
Don't worry about shredding and playing fast. Concentrate on song arrangement and song structure; it will help your playing in spades. If you know when a chorus is coming on a folk song, or when a bridge is coming on a country song, or when a big riff is supposed to happen on a rock song, that's gold. It'll change your life. And if you play for other people, they're not going to want you to just spew and vomit all over their song. But if you know structures and arrangements, you'll know how to write killer parts that stick in people's heads. That's super important.

Q: Country or rock?
Every rock guy will look you in the face and tell you they know how to play Jerry Reed chicken pickin' stuff or Merle Travis thumb picking, but they don't really know how to do it. It really requires 10,000 hours for each of those things. I'm a rare bird because of where I was brought up, which was on the Texas-Louisiana border; there was honky tonk and the blues. When we were kids, we were listening to Freddie King's "Goin' Down" way before Jeff Beck.
— Joe Matera

WHAT'S ON MY PLAYLIST

AXEL RUDI PELL

1
"Sahara"
Joe Satriani
This was the first song I heard from *The Elephants of Mars.* He has such a great feeling for awesome melodies, and the playing is perfect. It's unbelievable that he played all his guitars over the Sans-Amp for this album. Great sounds too!

2
"Zick Zack"
Rammstein
I saw the video on YouTube and it's so funny — one of the best, most complex clips in a long time. Although it's in German, anybody can see what it's about... the beauty mania. The music is typically Rammstein with very heavy rhythm guitars and a catchy chorus, which really shines. Love it!

3
"Scars"
Smith/Kotzen
Great vocals from both Adrian and Richie. I also love the guitar playing from both. Great composition too — and Richie's guitar sound is just stunning. It's unbelievable that he doesn't use picks! Awesome!

4
"Foreplay/Long Time"
All Star Jam (Jelusick, Portnoy, Linder, Doley, Hoekstra, Johnson)
I absolutely love this tune! The singing and playing on this Boston cover is out of this world. Jeez Christ — they're so amazing. Joel Hoekstra probably ist the best recent hard rock guitar player. Wow!

5
"Oh Well"
Deep Purple
An absolutely stunning version of this old Fleetwood Mac song. Steve Morse really shines here. Everybody knows I'm a huge Ritchie Blackmore admirer, but *chapeau* to Steve and the rest of the guys. It's simply brilliant, and the video is cool too!

PELL'S LATEST ALBUM, ***LOST XXIII***, IS OUT NOW ON STEAMHAMMER/SPV.

INQUIRER: JORDI VIDAL/REDFERNS PLAYLIST: PROVIDED/PR

[*from left*] Ty Tabor, Jerry Gaskill and dUg Pinnick

Prog Points INSIDE OUT

Long Live King's X

KING'S X STALWARTS TY TABOR AND DUG PINNICK TAKE YOU INSIDE *THREE SIDES OF ONE*, THE VENERABLE PROG-ROCK TRIO'S FIRST ALBUM IN 14 LONG YEARS

By Gregory Adams

FOLLOWING A 14-YEAR drought, progressive hard rock trio King's X have finally returned with a new album, *Three Sides of One*. Fittingly enough, it begins with a dramatic stormer called "Let It Rain," which is immediately followed by a proto-djent maelstrom of open D syncopation called "Flood Pt. 1."

Sure, King's X have blown the gates back open, but it took some convincing for the trio to go with the flow.

"I've been ready to do a record since the last one; I pushed it all the time," bassist-vocalist dUg Pinnick says of the gap, guitarist Ty Tabor adding, "It's just been a long time since we were all hungry enough to get in and make that happen." Drummer Jerry Gaskill admits he'd been the holdout on making new music, perhaps a reaction to having suffered a massive heart attack in 2012 that necessitated being revived, and having a second cardiac event in 2014 that led to open-heart surgery ("Dying kind of threw me for a loop — that might have been a factor in why I didn't want to do [*the album*]"). Following a reassuring call with producer/engineer Michael Parnin (Mark Lanegan, Neko Case), however, Gaskill was onboard to begin recording sessions in 2019.

All of King's X had produced solo albums between 2008's *XV* and *Three Sides of One*. Pinnick, in particular, notes that he'd written hundreds of songs along the way, some of which appearing through his work with outside power trios KXM and Grinder Blues, as well as his most recent solo release, 2021's *Joy Bomb*. But with more than 40 years of innate chemistry flowing between himself and the rest of King's X, it only took a couple of takes at Parnin's Blacksound Music facility in Los Angeles for the bassist to realize what he'd been missing.

"I did a lot of side projects in those 14 years, but coming out of the control room and listening to the first song back, that was the first time I ever got it: 'This is King's X, and this is perfect'. Not in an egotistical way, I just keep forgetting that these are the guys that I make this magic with."

"Everyone I know that plays through them thinks they sound like crap… but I prefer transistors; they fit with how I play guitar"
— TY TABOR

He continues: "There's this comfort that I feel in the bubble of [*King's X*] that I don't feel when I play with other people. With others, I feel like I'm holding onto them, doing what I have to do, but with King's X it's like I'm riding in a Rolls Royce — [*it's*] laid back."

There are, in fact, some supremely chill moments to behold on *Three Sides of One* — check the elegiac, orchestral strings-backed prog-folk of "Take the Time" — but the track that kicked off the sessions, "Fes-

DEREK SOTO FACING PAGE: CHARLIE RAVEN

tival," is also one of its most frenzied. It's a tempo-pushing anthem about the joy of putting on a performance, capped with an off-the-cuff blaze of bluesy leadwork from Tabor. That said, there's a sinisterly blasé slant to the in-song promoters' suggestion of the risk that comes with putting on a festival: "what's the worst, maybe somebody dies?"

"To me, it's the ultimate irony song," Tabor says. "The song makes me want to celebrate — the song makes me want to have a festival — and yet the underlying message is, 'if you don't know what you're doing, things can turn out badly.'"

On a technical front, though, King's X are on top form throughout *Three Sides of One* — whether that's Tabor's vibrato rising through a "heartfelt, melodic and slow-to-get-there" two-minute solo on spacious blues-ballad "Nothing But the Truth," or the band locking in for the punishingly percussive low note chugging of "Swipe Up." Pinnick sums up the latter: "I was looking for the mathematical thing that King's X does — you know, 'Born to Be Loved,' things like that — it's just a part of how we write."

In the studio, Pinnick plunked at his signature Schecters, while Tabor mainly toted his '83 Strat Elite and a Goldtop Les Paul. The guitarist notes that a massive in-studio pedalboard yielded lush results from a Leslie speaker-modeled RotoSIM and a Rook Royale boost, though a major part of Tabor's tone remains the solid state grit of the Lab Series L5. "They have way more of an immediate, punch-in-the-face [*quality*] than tubes," he says. "Everyone else I know that plays through them thinks they sound like crap, and they hate them — and I totally understand — but I prefer transistors; they fit with how I play guitar."

Upon an already triumphant return, *Three Sides of One*'s most uplifting moment might be "Give It Up," which cross-pollinates a pulse-quickening Texas boogie with a galloping Seventies metal sneer. Pinnick admits it's a song about growing older, but ultimately, it's about determinedly hanging onto his groove.

"I'm 71, so I'm concerned about that," he elaborates. "I'm trying to figure out how I can build myself up without pushing myself too hard, because there are times when I'll hit a high note, full-force, and I'll faint for a minute, or my hands'll go numb. I'm thinking 'Is this a stroke, or am I just hyperventilating? What's the deal here?'"

At the same time, the bassist isn't backing down from a challenge. With a new album and touring on the way, King's X are definitely back. In other words, Pinnick isn't giving up any time soon.

Reef guitarist Jesse Wood with an Epiphone Wilshire

Reef

JESSE WOOD — SON OF THE ROLLING STONES' RONNIE — ON SHARING GUITAR DUTIES WITH DURAN DURAN'S ANDY TAYLOR ON THEIR ROLLICKING NEW ALBUM

By Mark McStea

U.K. ROCKERS REEF recently released *Shoot Me Your Ace*, their second album since they reformed in 2015 after a 12-year hiatus. Much like their last album, 2018's *Revelation*, the band have channelled the influences of their heroes — acts like Humble Pie, Free and the Faces — to deliver a timeless, organic slice of modern classic rock. Perhaps the latter influence is no surprise, as the band features Jesse Wood, son of Ronnie Wood [*Jeff Beck Group, the Creation, the Faces, the Rolling Stones, Ringo Starr's "Dead Giveway," etc.*], on guitar.

The album was produced by Duran Duran's Andy Taylor, who shared guitar duties with Wood. "We recorded the whole album over a weekend, which is pretty quick by anybody's standards — six songs per day," the younger Wood says. "We worked in the way Keith Richards describes as 'the ancient art of weaving.' We'd trade solos and riffs; the whole idea is you end up with something that's more than the sum of its parts. Andy has moved on to another project, so we're debating whether we should get another guitarist in; it really is a two-guitar album, so we want to do it justice when we play live."

Growing up, Wood didn't get the benefit of having lessons from his father. "My parents split up when I was young and I lived with my mother. My dad did get a guitar made for me, though. It was called a Jessecaster, a tiny guitar with a [*Seymour Duncan*] Hot Rails pickup on it — I've still got it; it sounds great, raucous like Seasick Steve. My first acoustic was an old Gibson J-185 my dad gave me."

"We worked in the way Keith Richards describes as 'the ancient art of weaving'"
— JESSE WOOD

In terms of amps and guitars, Wood is a traditionalist. "I like the Epiphone Wilshire re-issues from about 2009," he says. "I mainly use Vox amps; I have a deal with them, and they built me two 4x12 cabs in beige. I also use Hiwatt amps live. I just got a Plumes overdrive by EarthQuaker Devices. I use a Voodoo Lab Univibe, a [*Dunlop*] Slash wah and a lot of Strymon pedals."

Prior to joining Reef, Wood was a huge fan of the band. He'd played in a number of his own bands and had also performed at various shows with his father. "When Reef asked me to audition and I got the job, I was overjoyed. Everything just felt right. I remember when I was 13, I went to see the Stones on the *Steel Wheels* tour. I was standing at the back of the stage looking out onto the stadium. It was an amazing moment. I remember thinking I wouldn't mind a bit of that. [*Laughs*] It started to resonate within my soul at that point."

Nova Twins' Georgia South [*left*] and Amy Love perform at the 2021 Reading Festival in the U.K.

Nova Twins

THE STEAMROLLIN' U.K. DUO ARE TAKING HEAVY ROCK IN WILD NEW DIRECTIONS. JUST DON'T ASK THEM WHAT'S ON THEIR PEDALBOARDS

By Damon Orion

JUST WHEN YOU think it's all been done, a badass female duo comes roaring out of London with a vibrant new sound. The music of Nova Twins is a mind-bending speedball of heavy rock, hip-hop, punk, pop, EDM, crime movies and road rage. A big part of the magic lies in the electronic-sounding tones that guitarist/vocalist Amy Love and bassist Georgia South wring from their effect pedals. Don't even bother asking what those pedals are, though.

"It's almost like a secret recipe," Love says. "If your grandma has a secret recipe, you don't go tell everyone that recipe. I don't really want to know how Tom Morello or Royal Blood get their sonics. I just want to enjoy it."

Nova Twins' eclectic style is partly a product of their diverse heritage: Love is of Iranian/Nigerian descent, and South is Jamaican/Australian. On the duo's second full-length album, *Supernova*, traces of their far-flung ancestry can be heard in the harmonic minor runs that introduce "Antagonist" and in the leads at the end of "Cleopatra," which seem to derive from an aggressive variant of the Phrygian dominant scale.

Love's style of guitar playing comes from instinct rather than formal training. With some encouragement from South's father, she picked up the guitar in her early 20s, when Nova Twins were first forming.

AXOLOGY

AMY LOVE
- **GUITARS** Fender Player Mustang 90, Fender Player Plus Stratocaster HSS, Fender American Professional II Stratocaster HSS
- **AMPS** Fender Hot Rod Deluxe IV, Marshall Origin50C
- **EFFECTS** Don't ask...

GEORGIA SOUTH
- **BASSES** Westone Thunder 1, Fender Precision Bass
- **AMPS** Gallien-Kreuger MB212, Marshall Valvestate
- **EFFECTS** Nice try, bud.

"When we're on stage, we feel unstoppable. We want people to feel that energy when they're listening at a show or at home"
— GEORGIA SOUTH

"I remember thinking to myself, 'God, how am I going to start now? My brain isn't spongy anymore!'" she notes with a laugh.

As self-proclaimed "boss bitches," Nova Twins fill their songs with unrepentant odes to their own strength and well-worded vows to crush their enemies. Edgy as it might be, their message is ultimately a positive one, especially coming from two powerful women of color.

"When we're on stage, we feel unstoppable," South says. "We want people to feel that energy when they're listening at a show or at home."

Love and South's explosive anthems of empowerment have won them cover stories in *Kerrang!* and *NME*, not to mention spots as a supporting act for the likes of Rage Against the Machine, Bring Me the Horizon, Yungblud, Wolf Alice and Prophets of Rage. At this rate, we should be seeing a custom Nova Twins effect pedal in no time. (May we suggest naming it the Boss Bitch?)

JOSEPH OKPAKO/WIREIMAGE

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beabadoobee in action at the 2022 Coachella Valley Music And Arts Festival in Indio, California

RICH FURY/GETTY IMAGES FOR COACHELLA

beabadoobee

WHY A WHIRL OF ALTERNATE TUNINGS MIGHT BE THE SECRET SAUCE FOR THIS SELF-TAUGHT GEN Z GUITAR HERO

By Joe Matera

AFTER BEING HANDED a secondhand guitar from her dad when she was 17, British indie rocker beabadoobee (born Beatrice Laus) has been on an upward trajectory. "Coffee," literally the first song she ever wrote, went viral and lifted Laus from bedroom strummer to Gen Z guitar hero. A succession of EPs soon followed, and her debut album, *Fake It Flowers,* appeared in 2020. Along the way, she's racked up live performances at Coachella, *Jimmy Kimmel Live,* the 2020 Rising Star Session at Abbey Road and more.

Her sophomore effort, *Beatopia,* sees the 21-year-old Laus throwing out the rule book and delving into psychedelia, emo, fuzzy rock and pop. "I just felt like there were no more rules. I wanted to do everything I could," she says. "We just wanted — depending on the song — to capture the vibe of what we were trying to create with the way the guitar sounded. So I explored a lot of weird, strange ways of recording the music."

Much of Laus' sonic palette is heavily infused with the spirit of Nineties grunge. "It's part of my vocabulary," she says. "It's within my world and personality, and it almost threads its way into my music without me even realizing. It's subconscious because I listened to so many bands from that era. Especially with *Fake It Flowers*, I was listening to a lot of My Bloody Valentine — and it just kind of happened."

Teaching herself guitar from YouTube videos — with a playlist rich in My Bloody Valentine, Sonic Youth and Elliot Smith — led her to experiment with alternate tunings.

"We've been trying to limit the amount of guitar changes on stage — because I have too much," she says. "But with some songs, you really can't duplicate the sound because of how open the strings are. There's such a specific sound with tunings, so you need another guitar for that specific tuning. It will change the whole song, essentially, if I play in standard when it's supposed to be in some weird emo tuning I found on YouTube... We have a very big guitar rig. It's a hard job for the guitar tech."

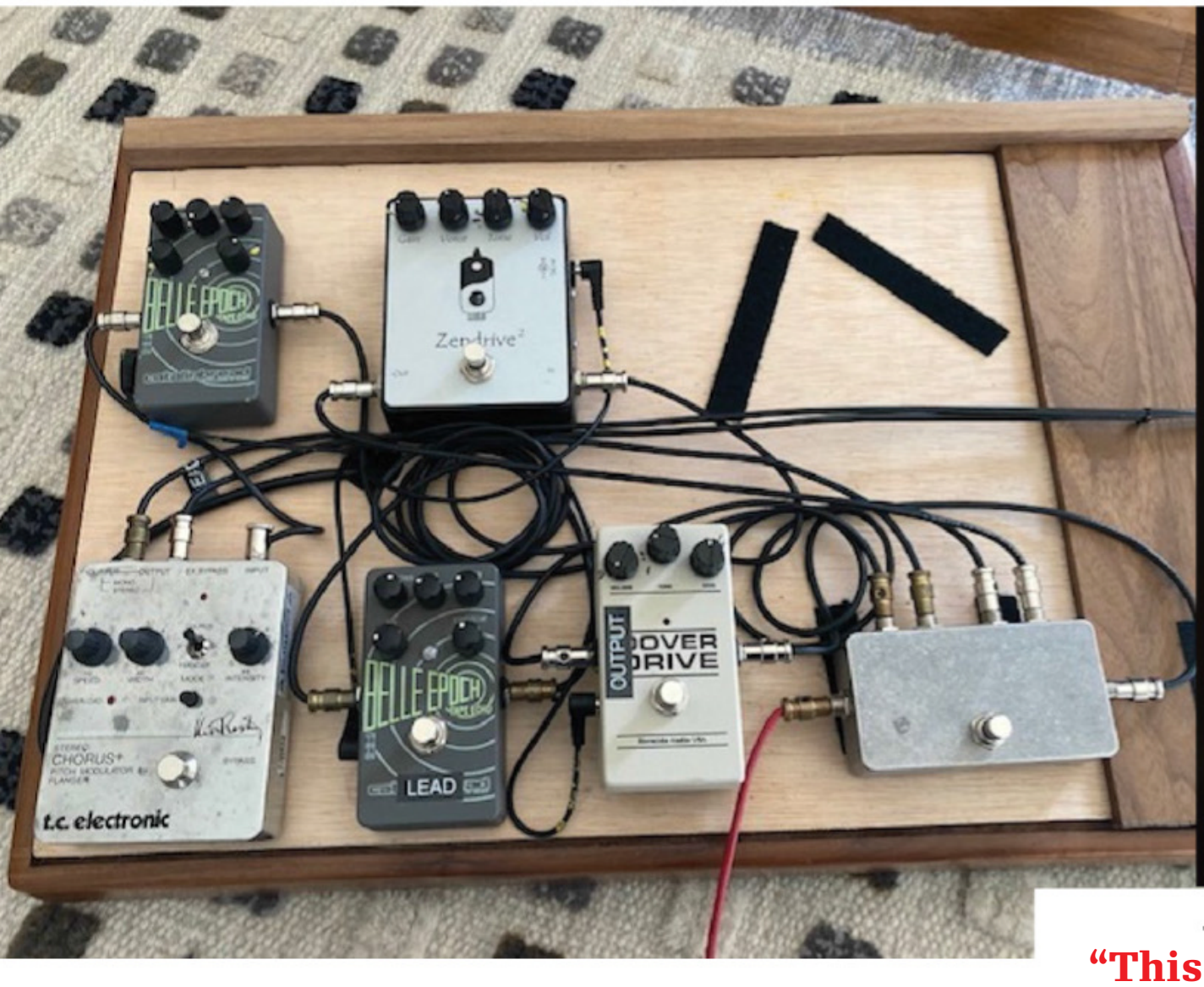
Laus firmly believes it's these unique tunings that underpin her songs. "It isn't necessarily the right way of playing," she says, "but, what I find is, because I'm not a very strong guitar player, I'll tune my guitar to a lot of tunings, and it helps create a really pretty sound. So most of the songs on this record are in different tunings."

Unlike her tunings, however, Laus plays it straight — as in pretty much straight into the amp. "I play through a Marshall and don't have many effects... My guitarist, Jacob [*Bugden*], has all the crazy, crazy, crazy, pedals, but I like to keep mine plain and simple."

"[Nineties grunge] is within my world and personality, and it almost threads its way into my music without me even realizing"

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** 1978 Fender Mustang
- **AMP** Marshall 1974X Blue Tolex Ltd Ed. 1x12 hand-wired combo amp
- **EFFECTS** Boss ES-5, Boss CS-3, Fulltone OCD, Source Audio EQ2, EarthQuaker Devices Westwood, Strymon BigSky



"This group of pedals is perfect for practicing and writing"

MY PEDALBOARD
ERIC JOHNSON

WHAT THE GROUNDBREAKING TEXAS GUITARIST SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Joe Bosso

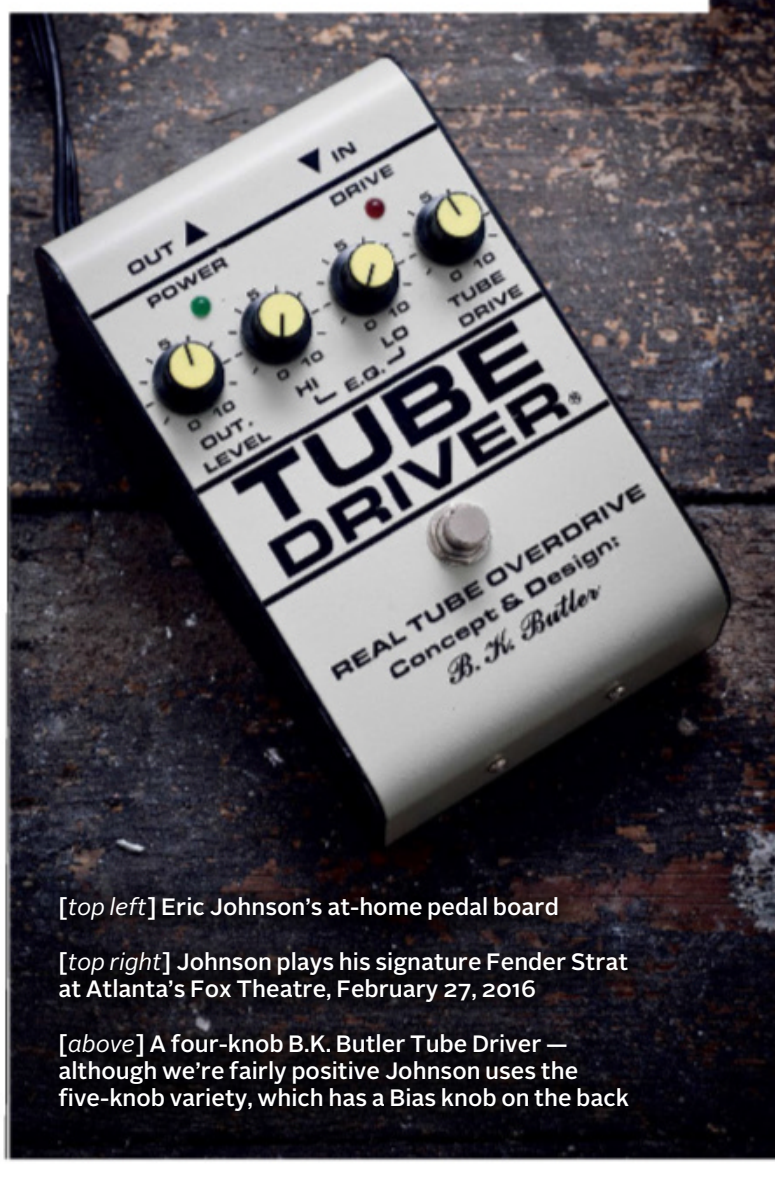
"HERE'S A LITTLE pedalboard setup I use sometimes for home practice. It doesn't have all the variety of tones as my main board, but it's enough for me to get the basic sounds I like to use. I don't usually record at home unless I'm making a demo of ideas, so this group of pedals is perfect for practicing and writing.

"My guitar is plugged into the silver double loop box [*top left photo, bottom right*], the main output of which goes into a Catalinbread Belle Epoch tape echo, then to a T.C. Electronic SCF Stereo Chorus+. From there, the signal goes to one or two amps.

"Send A of the loop box goes to a [*Hermida Audio*] Zendrive [*2*], then to a [*Hermida*] Dover Drive and back to the return jack of the A loop box. This side of the loop is used for dirty rhythm or lead sounds. I leave the Zendrive on all the time for a slightly crunchy rhythm tone, and I turn the Dover Drive on or off, depending on what kind of lead tone I want.

"Send B of the loop box goes to a second Belle Epoch pedal, then back to the return jack. That side of the loop box is used for clean rhythm; if I want more wetness, I turn on the second Belle Epoch."

■ *IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONLY ONE PEDAL FOR A FULL SHOW:*
"It's hard to decide between a B.K. Butler Tube Driver and a [*Dunlop*] Fuzz Face. Do I have to decide?"



[*top left*] Eric Johnson's at-home pedal board

[*top right*] Johnson plays his signature Fender Strat at Atlanta's Fox Theatre, February 27, 2016

[*above*] A four-knob B.K. Butler Tube Driver — although we're fairly positive Johnson uses the five-knob variety, which has a Bias knob on the back

TOP: ERIC JOHNSON EJ LIVE: CHRIS MCKAY/GETTY IMAGES PEDALS: FUTURE

Wanna see someone's pedalboard? Let us know! Write to GWsoundingBoard@futurenet.com.

Kirk Hammett's Solo Debut

WHY THE METALLICA GUITARIST — BOLSTERED BY HIS BAND'S HEARTFELT BLESSING — SET OUT ALONE TO EXPLORE THE WILDS OF "AUDIO CINEMATIC" INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

By Brad Angle

"The mood in [Metallica] is pretty good," Hammett tells us. "We're all healthy, coming together, being creative and making the music we want to hear"

"THIS IS THE first time I'm playing 100 percent what the heck I want to play!" says Kirk Hammett over the phone from his home in Hawaii. Metallica's lead guitarist is known for being a genuinely stoked dude. But there's a reason that he's *extra* excited on this morning in early April — and it has zero to do with his Big Four band.

Hammett is about to release his debut solo outing, *Portals* — a four-song instrumental EP that finds the guitarist leaning into his love of horror films, classical music and soundtracks as he explores a musical style he calls "audio cinematic."

Clocking in at just under 30 minutes, the EP runs the gamut from spine-tingling metallic epics to sweeping spaghetti Western–flavored jams. Plenty of Hammett's signature Metallica moves are on display; *Portals* is stacked with massive riffs, dark, evocative picking sequences and wild solos. It also introduces some fresh new aspects of his playing, production and compositional styles in the form of beautiful flamenco moments, lush adventurous arrangements, acrobatic freewheeling leads and more.

Portals is the sound of Hammett unconstrained by the pressures and expectations of his main band and empowered to follow whatever path his muse led him down. "With Metallica, we approach every song like it's going to be heard by millions of people — so it'd *better* be good," he says with a laugh. "It's also very collaborative when I do solos. The producer has opinions. And I love Lars [*Ulrich*], but traditionally... he loves to micromanage. So he *always* gives me opinions... When I'm working on my own stuff, I go with the first idea: 95 percent of the playing on the EP is stream-of-consciousness stuff."

Hammett says flying solo was liberating but admits he still contended with some first-time jitters. "I feel really nervous and insecure because [*usually*] I have the other three guys there and we experience it all together," he says. Thankfully, he says, having "the band's blessing" for *Portals* helped calm his nerves. "I said to James [*Hetfield*], 'This is weird. I'm used to having you guys to lean on. He said, 'This is a growing experience for you. Enjoy it.'" Hammett heeded Hetfield's advice and focused his energy on "stepping outside of my own personal judgment" and playing "straight from the heart... and soul."

Spiritual concepts — souls, higher powers, the supernatural — play a big part in *Portals*. "There is a very metaphysical thread that runs through all of it, bro," he says. "The title, *Portals*, [*means*] to bring someone to a completely different mental space through music.

"I've been meditating for the last 30 years," he continues. "I have a deep spiritual connection [*that*] informs my perception... I believe that to be an artist is to do the work of the creator [*and to*] echo the process of whoever created this reality. That [*awareness*] keeps my intentions right. I create art because it feels good and... if it helps or brings joy to other people, I feel

LEFT: ROSS HALFIN RIGHT: BRETT MURRAY

"[*Portals*] is the beginning of more output from me," Hammett says. "I've established a momentum and I feel like it's breaking down some doors"

like I've accomplished something that was set into motion eons ago!"

When it came to *Portals*' musical touchstones, Hammett says his main inspirations were classical music and Italian film composer Ennio Morricone, followed closely by the instrumental guitar work of acts like Yes, Rush, Iron Maiden, Mahavishnu Orchestra and Al Di Meola. He also drew from progressive rock, a genre he says has become a newfound obsession. "I only started listening to prog music like five years ago," he says. "I love Jethro Tull, Genesis, King Crimson. There's so much I'm just discovering."

The genesis of *Portals* can be traced back to 2017, when Hammett held the first exhibition of his horror memorabilia collection, *It's Alive*, at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. He wanted a soundtrack for the art show, so he penned the haunting, cinematic seven-minute-plus "Maiden and the Monster" (with some help from his wife, Lani). The equally foreboding crusher "The Jinn" arose from a similar exercise ahead of another museum show in Toronto. "I was dumbfounded that it happened twice," he says with a laugh.

Hammett says he's constantly writing music. ("I wake up, and I play my fucking guitar!") But completing those first two full songs was a breakthrough moment. He felt compelled to see where this solo creative path might take him. And then Edwin Outwater entered his orbit.

In 2019, Metallica tapped the conductor to lead the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra for their *S&M2* shows and live album. During rehearsals, Hammett and Outwater instantly hit it off ("He's a big horror fan"), and the guitarist floated the idea to collaborate. Outwater was down, so the two began sketching out the material that would become *Portals*' doomy riff fest "The Incantation" and moody, orchestral "High Plains Drifter" (the latter borrowing its name from Clint Eastwood's classic 1973 film).

"This is the first time I'm playing 100 percent what the heck I want to play!"

The pair made great progress, until Covid arrived in early 2020 and brought the project to a screeching halt. Hammett and Outwater managed to complete demos later that year. And when restrictions finally lifted in 2021, they recruited "a small studio session band" — made up of L.A. Philharmonic members and Hammett's frequent jam partner drummer John Theodore — and cut the two songs at L.A.'s Hanson Studios. "We recorded fully masked up," he recalls. "It was weird, but we did it."

Hammett tracked *Portals* — which also features drummer Abraham Laboriel, bassist Greg Fidelman and arranger Blake Neely — primarily on his beloved 1959 Gibson Les Paul Standard "Greeny" (whose pedigree includes Gary Moore and original owner Peter Green), a Teuffel Tesla and his signature ESP Mummy and natural wood-finish Ouija guitars. On the acoustic-led "High Plains Drifter," Hammett employed a late-Sixties Martin D-28, a Takamine, a Strat-style Fender Acoustasonic and a custom classical nylon string from Spain. For amplification, he relied on an arsenal of Marshalls, Mesa/Boogies and a circa-1955 Fender Deluxe that he calls "Phantom of the Opera" because "it's so beat up and ugly... but it sounds amazing."

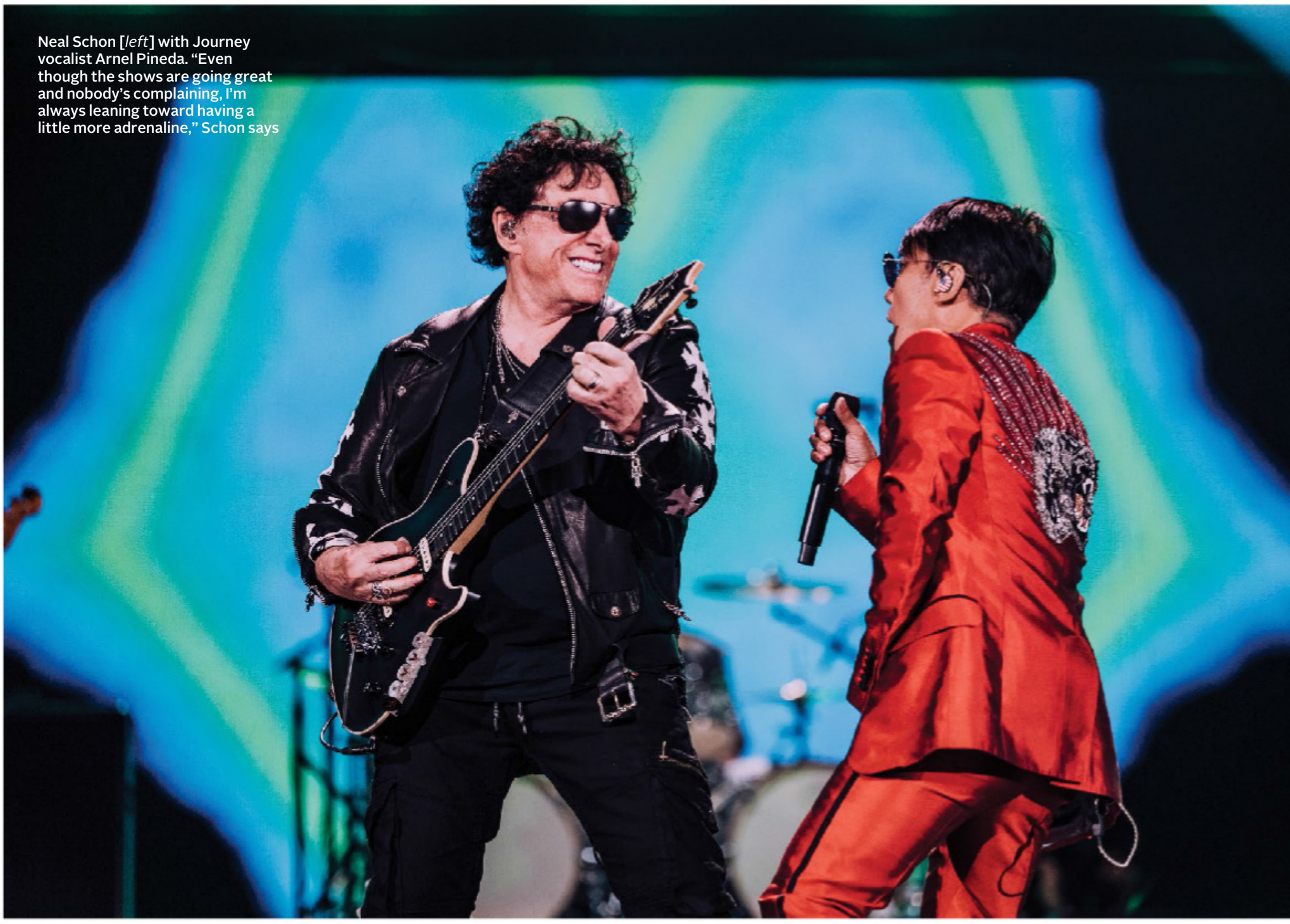
"On 'High Plains Drifter' and 'Incantation' I used a Boogie head [*prototype, but*] they ended up canceling it and it didn't come out," he says. "There's this guy who has this old Plexi Marshall from, like, '68. It's a very well-known head in L.A. ... everyone rents this head. But I fully knew that when I blended it with that canceled Mesa/Boogie I would have a pretty unique sound."

Portals also includes some intense wah-wah workouts, namely the explosive finale of "The Incantation," which Hammett created with his signature Jim Dunlop Cry Baby Wah. That track also boasts a striking sitar section — and a serendipitous appearance of a Black Album-era instrument. "I found a sitar for 500 bucks [*for*] the demo," he says. "When we recorded for real in L.A., my business manager [*sent*] the same sitar that I played on 'Wherever I May Roam.' Like, I just wanted the cheap one, but we ended up with the real *serious* Coral one! [*Laughs*]"

Mixes and overdubs were finished back in Oahu with help from Metallica's old producer Bob Rock, who was living on the neighboring island Maui. Creating *Portals* in the Covid era clearly presented some unique logistical challenges, but Hammett says the project was a godsend. "It felt good to have something to work on... even though I still felt like I was sitting on my ass most of the time. [*Laughs*]"

From the sound of *Portals*, it's clear Hammett made good use of his time. What's more, the guitarist also reports it wasn't the only new music he worked on during the "lost Covid years." He tells *Guitar World* that Metallica have been "active on all fronts and moving forward" with new songs. "The mood in the band is pretty good," he continues. "We're all healthy, coming together, being creative and making the music we want to hear."

As our chat winds down, we ask Hammett if he envisions more solo releases in his future. "I have a *ton* of material: jazz, blues, rock, metal, fucking funk, bossa nova..." he says, excitedly. "I can play *all* these types of music, and this is a good chance to show I have chops. This is the beginning of more output from me... I've established a momentum and I feel like it's breaking down some doors for myself."



Neal Schon [*left*] with Journey vocalist Arnel Pineda. "Even though the shows are going great and nobody's complaining, I'm always leaning toward having a little more adrenaline," Schon says

MAKIN' TRACKS
NEAL SCHON

THE VENERABLE JOURNEY MAN WALKS US THROUGH FOUR CLASSIC JOURNEY SONGS — AND FOUR FROM THE BAND'S FIRST NEW STUDIO ALBUM IN 11 YEARS, *FREEDOM*

"The Way We Used to Be" from *Freedom* (2022)

THIS WAS THE first song I wrote during the pandemic. I wrote it on keyboards then sent my keyboard loop to [*Journey keyboardist*] Jonathan [*Cain*]. I didn't think it sounded like your typical Journey song, but it was something to do for myself; I had to get things rolling in some kind of way to get my brain going. When I listened back, I thought, "I don't know if this is a Journey track, but it sounds funky, bluesy and kind of edgy." I thought it sounded like a modern Stones kind of vibe — or the Faces. I was really surprised when Jonathan sent me back his demo. He had written all the melodies and the lyrics, and I went, "That sounds really good." That was the beginning of the writing for this new album. Guitar-wise, I kind of left this one sparse; I love hearing the air and the holes in it. Great-sounding Strat, though! It was a relic black Strat from the Fender Custom Shop that has some type of noiseless pickups, [*but*] not the newer ones they're making now. I used it on quite a bit of songs on the record.

"Don't Give Up on Us" from *Freedom*

WHEN NARADA [MICHAEL-WALDEN] and I started laying down tracks, it was mainly him and me in the studio because we live close together in Marin County [*California*]. While the lockdown was happening, I'd go to his studio and at least work with drums and guitar. Then I'd put some bass and scratch vocals on it. He'd sing a bit, I'd sing a bit — but that's how that song came about. I just started chunking away on the guitar with what I thought sounded like some Motown chords, then I sang some melodies on it. I sent Jonathan the song after it was arranged and after we had overdubbed on it, so it sounded pretty complete. He came up with the melodies; after he sent it back, we continued to do vocal demos on it and back-

"It ended up being massive. It just took a long time for everybody to catch up!"

ground vocals. It's wild how this was definitely a lockdown album where everybody was in different locations — except for Narada and me.

"You Got the Best of Me" from *Freedom*

I WAS LOOKING for more up-tempo songs for our set. Even though the shows are going great and nobody's complaining, I'm always leaning toward having a little more adrenaline. I knocked that one out, arrangement-wise, before I came into the studio with Narada. We laid it down, and then the chorus just kind of flew out of my mouth like "Any Way You Want It" and "Wheel in the Sky" where I kind of came up with the hook and the chorus, lyrically and melody-wise. Then I had the melodies; I sang my melody ideas and sent it to Jonathan, who finished the song lyrically. Then we just continued to tighten up the pieces; I sent it to [*bassist*] Randy [*Jackson*], to [*vocalist*] Arnel [Pineda]...

"Let It Rain" from *Freedom*

THIS WAS A cool idea that was bouncing around in my head for years. I always loved the Chaka Khan song [*"Clouds"*], and I love that Hendrix-y type, Prince funk vibe. It reminded me of a lot of the early stuff before I started Journey — things I was working on with Greg Orrico and Larry Graham. It brought me to that time and space where I was remembering that slow, sexy groove that was in my head and always had it on kind of a Whammy pedal. So I brought one into the studio and I started jamming with Narada — and it ended up being the song that it is now, without changing anything.

We have about five generations of fans coming to our shows now, which is pretty amazing. I felt like this is definitely for some of our younger fans who never got to see the late-Sixties, early Seventies vibe of everything that was coming out of England — a Hendrix, Zeppelin kind of a mixture of Jimmy Page, Prince and all the influences I grew up with.

"Wheel in the Sky" from *Infinity* (1978)

WE HAD COMPLETED our first three records. We hadn't changed our lineup at that point, and we were all traveling in two station wagons — all crammed in. We had eight, nine guys in one car. There were long road trips with [*former Journey drummer*] Aynsley Dunbar at the steering wheel with his fuzz buster. Everybody had to take a break and pull over to the roadside to take a leak. Our road manager happened to be driving that day, Pat Morrow, and he was just fatigued. Our old manager, Herbie Herbert, who is resting in heaven, was yelling at him over the phone, "Pat, you've got to do this, you've got to do that." Pat said, "I've got to pull over. I need a break. I need a candy bar."

So we pulled over at this gas station. I pulled out an acoustic and sat on the hood of the car and started banging out the chords. I came up with all the verse and B sections, then the chorus came out within minutes. At that point, our then-bass player, Ross Valory, and his then-wife, Diane... she had handed me some poetry she had written; I remembered a line that said, "Wheels are turning on my mind." I don't know where it came from, but I was banging out D minor chords in the chorus and I said, "Wheel in the sky keeps on turning. Don't know where I'll be tomorrow."

CBS at that time came to us and said, "You need a front man, otherwise we're going to drop you." So I started writing with Robert Fleischman — and that was the first song we wrote together.

"Don't Stop Believin'" from *Escape* (1981)

FOR THE FIRST time, you're hearing a chorus on the outro, which was completely against all rules of nature in that time period — and now — if you're going to try to get a song on the radio. The saying was, "Don't bore me. Get to the chorus." In this case, the chorus didn't happen until the end of the song. Actually, I had a short guitar solo before the chorus; so the obvious thing for me to do was to play the melody of "Don't Stop Believin'" — the melody people are going to hear right after I play it. Steve turned to me and said, "What? You're going to play the melody that I'm going to sing?" I go, "Why not? It's a good one."

When the song was done and the mix was almost finalized, I turned to everybody in the room and said, "I think this song is going to be massive." They released it as a single, and it wasn't so massive — but then it ended up being massive. It just took a long time for everybody to catch up! Jonathan wrote the lyrics, "don't stop believin'" with Steve, but it was a phrase his father had given him when he was trying to make it in the music industry and not having much luck, I guess. His dad said, "Don't give up, son." It just kind of came out of that.

"Any Way You Want It" from *Departure* (1980)

THAT ONE CAME about during sound check; I believe we were on tour or just had toured with Thin Lizzy. I was a big fan, so it was a classic case of being inspired by some of the cool-sounding riffs they had. I came up with the simple riff that goes all the way through the song — another song where there's three chords to it and that's it. It came together in a very short period of time — I'd say an hour. It continues to be our second most-downloaded song. Crazy.

"Patiently" from *Infinity*

THE FIRST SONG I wrote with Steve [*Perry*]. I believe we were on tour with Emerson, Lake & Palmer. I had an acoustic in my room, and I had these chords, the verse chords, and our manager at the time, Herbie Herbert, wanted Steve and me to get together to see if there was any chemistry before he joined the band. I recall sitting in the room; I was playing him the core changes, and he just started singing to it. I guess he had some lyrics that... just kind of fit the song. I think we knocked it out in about half an hour. I was like, "I guess we have writing chemistry!"

Interview by Joshua M. Miller

Freedom, Journey's first new studio album since 2011's *Eclipse*, was released July 8 via BMG. For more info, check out journeymusic.com

THIS CAN REBUILD A COMMUNITY.

At the D'Addario Foundation, we believe the most effective instrument for creating lasting, positive change for children and their communities is music education. That's why we work with over 200 successful, diverse community-based programs to help bring music to kids who may never have access otherwise. And 100% of your donation to the D'Addario Foundation goes directly towards giving music education to children. So every dollar you give makes a real difference. Learn more at daddariofoundation.org

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APP-ETITE FOR CONSTRUCTION

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2022'S BEST GUITAR APPS – TOP CHOICES FOR LEARNING, TUNING, RECORDING AND MORE

BY MATT McCRACKEN

IF YOU HAVE a smartphone and you're still not using it to help with your guitar playing, you're missing out. The best guitar apps can truly help with your musical ventures, integrating into your practice regimen to help you become the player you want to be.

Whether it's a simple tuner or a fully fledged multi-track recorder, the modern guitarist is spoiled when it comes to apps. You don't have to be a new player to take advantage of them, either; there are plenty of great apps that'll help you solidify what you've already learned through practice, such as metronomes and loopers. To save you the hassle of sifting through the many options on Google Play or the App Store, we've put together our pick of the best guitar apps available today. Enjoy!

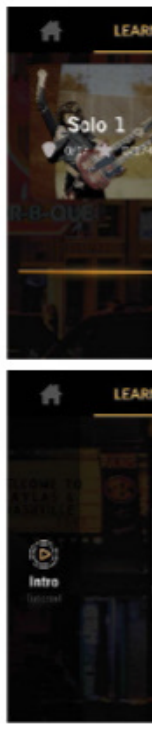
THE BOSS TUNER APP

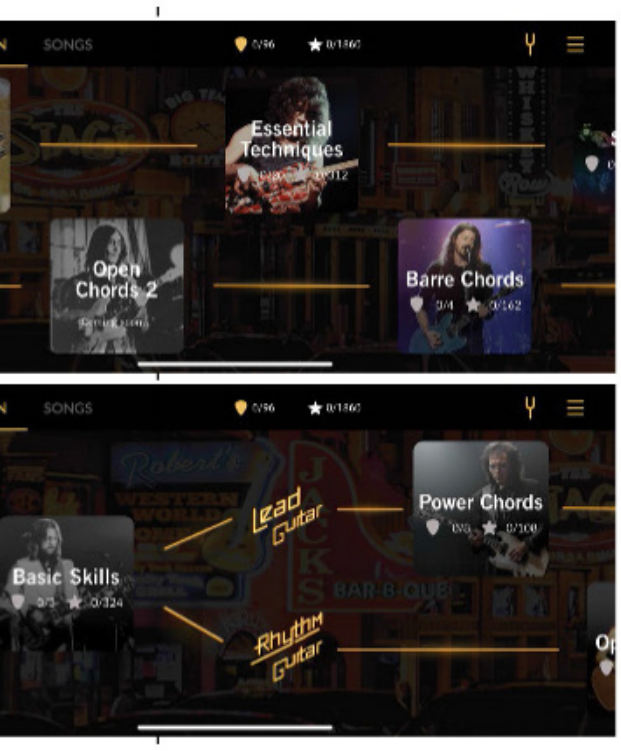
A must-have! It's incredibly simple, and with well over a million downloads on Google Play alone, it clearly does its job very well. It can tune all the way from A♯0 (29.14Hz) to G8 (6.2kHz), meaning you'll be covered for every instrument across the frequency spectrum, not just guitar. It also has two skins — one based on the classic Boss TU-3 Chromatic Tuner pedal, the other on the Waza Craft TU-3W version. P.S. It's free!

IT'S NOT LIKE THE OLD DAYS. TODAY'S GUITARISTS ARE STRAIGHT-UP SPOILED WHEN IT COMES TO APPS

AMPLITUBE

IK Multimedia's AmpliTube lets you use your iPhone or iPad to process, play and record your guitar while on the go. It's an all-inclusive tone studio that gives you an expandable collection of ultra-realistic virtual versions of some of the most coveted gear on the planet. Build the rig of your dreams and then use its powerful recording and editing tools to capture your creativity whenever and wherever inspiration strikes. The app lets you drag and drop pieces of virtual gear to create custom rigs consisting of seven stompbox effects (four pre-amp and two post), three amps and two cabs with up to two positionable mics. Each piece of virtual gear has been meticulously modeled so that it looks and sounds as good as it does in real life.



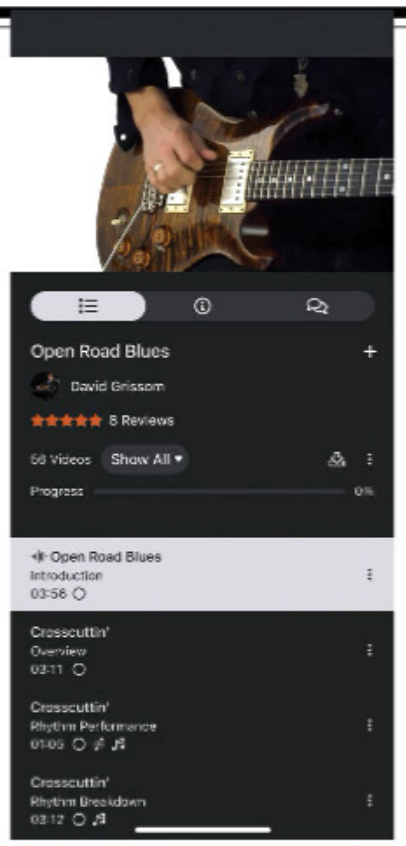


THE GIBSON APP

The hugely successful Gibson App — touted at the outset as the "only guitar app you need" — provides "two-way, interactive and immersive guitar-learning" with guided step-by-step lessons for electric and acoustic players in multiple genres and styles. It uses Audio Augmented Reality (AR), which interacts with players and creates an additional real-time guitar layer. Features include step-by-step learning for hundreds of songs (the AR tech listens to you play and offers feedback in real time); early access to interviews with Gibson artists and video tutorials; Gibson TV shows like *Icons, Riff Lords* and *The Collection*; a pretty nifty digital tuner, a virtual guitar tech and more. New features are added to the app each month.

THE METRONOME BY SOUNDBRENNER

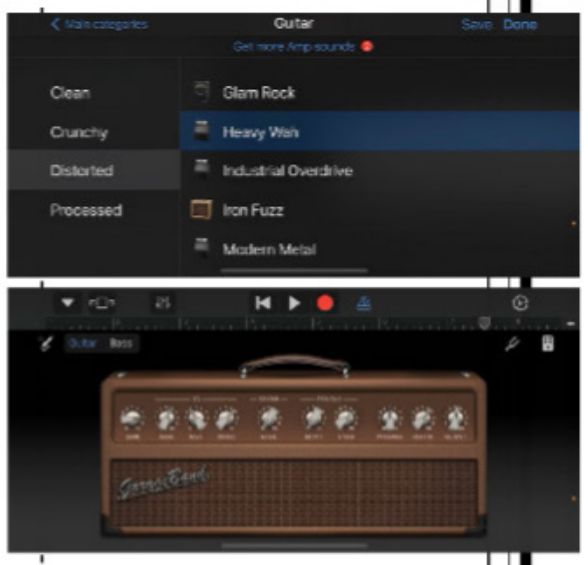
We've tried many top-rated metronome apps — and we think this is the best of the bunch. It features a wide range of speed settings, from 20bpm to a frankly insane 400bpm. You can create any iteration of time signature, too, from the standard 4/4 to more esoteric odds 'n sods like 11/8. You can save your metronome rhythms and group them into setlists, ready to be recalled at any time, and you can even have your phone flash in time with the beat — though we found that annoying after a few seconds! The app is like an NFL kicker; it's got one job — but it does it well.



TRUEFIRE

TrueFire is massive. Almost 52,000 instructional videos await, taught by hundreds of instructors, including big names such as Joe Bonamassa, Tommy Emmanuel, Robben Ford and Steve Vai. It has associated apps and blogs, a huge Facebook presence, jam tracks, one-to-one lessons — the feature set is just huge. But if we sweep the extras aside, it's all about delivering high-quality courses to guitar players of all levels for a subscription of $29 per month or $249 per year. It's possible to forgo a subscription and buy individual courses, but, unless your needs are very specific, this isn't cost-effective. A 14-day free trial is available, and we recommend you take advantage of it. In the end, most online guitar tuition platforms focus on teaching beginners how to play the guitar. TrueFire covers that ground, but it also exists to help intermediate and advanced students master their instruments. You could spend a lifetime, perhaps two, learning everything that TrueFire teaches.

GARAGEBAND IS PERFECT FOR MAKING YOU SOUND LIKE A PRO, REGARDLESS OF YOUR PLAYING ABILITY



GARAGEBAND

A music studio inside your Apple device! With this app you can start making professional-sounding music. Choose one of the Touch instruments or plug in your guitar and select one of their realistic amps. You can even add a virtual drummer to your song that takes direction and plays realistically. There's a ton of features. Garageband is perfect for making you sound like a pro, regardless of your playing ability. One of the standouts is that you can choose from nine acoustic or electronic drummers; each drummer has their own signature sound. By the way, the desktop version of GB is its own level of incredible.

DURING THE EARLY STAGES OF THE PANDEMIC WHEN MOST OF US WERE STUCK AT HOME, FENDER SAW A HUGE INCREASE IN GUITAR SALES AND USED THE IMPETUS TO IMPROVE ITS FENDER PLAY SERVICE

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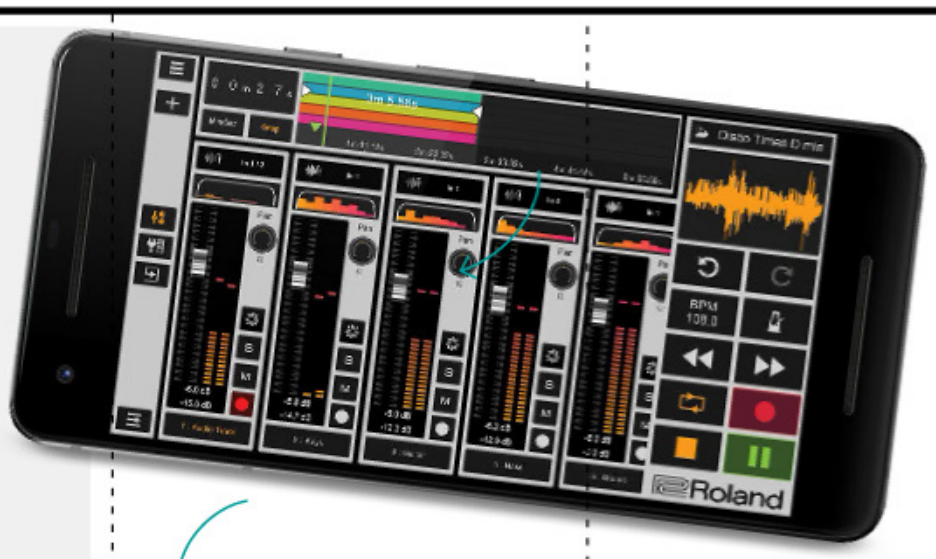


FENDER PLAY

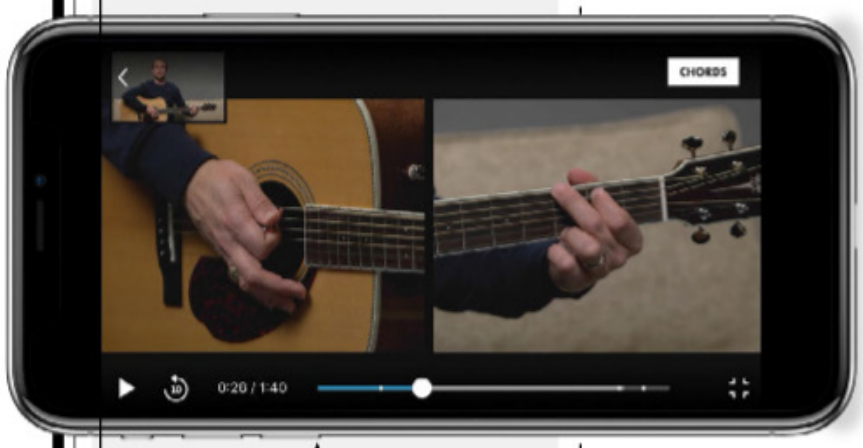
During the early stages of the pandemic when most of us were stuck at home, Fender saw a huge increase in guitar sales and used the impetus to improve its Fender Play service. The platform is now packed with more than 3,000 lessons that'll take you from basic chords to improvised soloing with hammer-ons, pull-offs, vibrato and other more advanced techniques. Professional instruction from Fender-recognized instructors means this is as close as you'll get to a traditional tutor — at a fraction of the price. With lots of great features, such as practice reminders, backing tracks and the always fun Chord Challenge, this is probably the most complete learning tool for beginners available today.

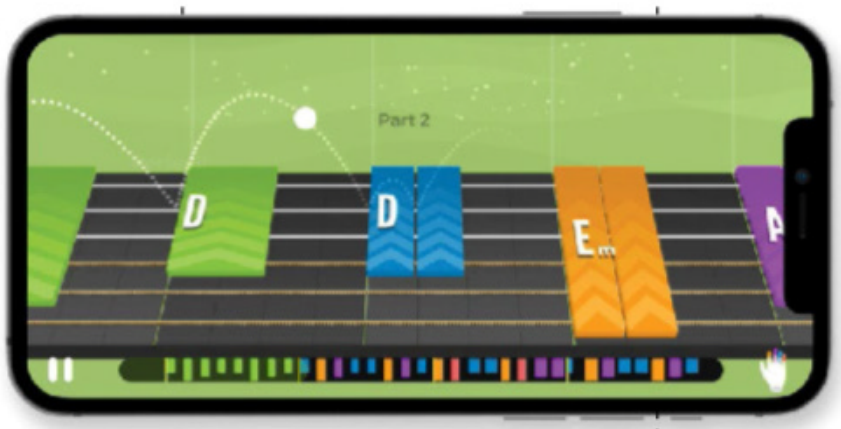
ROLAND ZENTRACKER

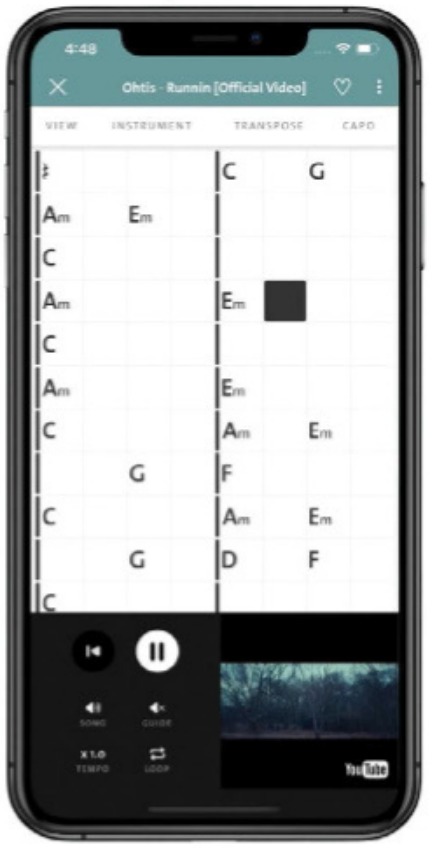
This is a complete DAW (digital audio workstation) for phone or tablet. It'll give you the ability to record multiple tracks using your device's built-in microphone, a USB mic or even a regular audio interface. We used it with Fender's Mustang Micro headphone amp and were blown away by some of the sounds we got out of it. Laying down multiple tracks to jam over really helped us with our writing process and enabled us to demo new songs to take into the studio. It's perfect for recording on the go and even comes with loops and samples for you to use in your mini-productions.

YOUSICIAN

This is one of the fastest-growing apps for beginner musicians, earning plaudits for its Guitar Hero-style teaching method, whereby budding instrumentalists can learn from visual cues in a way that's fun and engaging. You don't need anything other than your guitar and the app. Yousician gets its cues using the onboard microphone on a smart device, so as you play along, it'll recognize if you're fretting chords and notes correctly — and listen out for your timing too. Again, this app is just right for beginners — but you don't have to be a beginner to appreciate the app's animated, moving fretboard!







CHORDIFY

Chordify boasts the biggest library of chords, with more than 22 million songs in its database. Its interface is incredibly easy to use, which makes it great for beginners. The app will play the song you're learning via a YouTube video, simultaneously showing you the chords with the correct timing. This gives users a great feel for the rhythm of the song, far superior to just looking at a chord sheet and trying to recall the feel from memory. To get the most out of Chordify, you'll need to upgrade to Premium, which gives you access to some very powerful tools, such as transposing, speeding up or slowing down playback, and downloading MIDI chords for use in other software.

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IT'S PERSONAL

"I was so stoked to be doing another Exodus record," Gary Holt says of *Persona Non Grata*. "I had no intention of doing anything that wasn't 100 percent killer"

KEY TRACK

"'Prescribing Horror'... wound up being dark and super-scary, which we really liked"

TAYVA MARTINEZ

EXODUS

With the crushing new *Persona Non Grata*, Gary Holt proves there's life after Slayer

By Jon Wiederhorn

DURING THE LAST part of Gary Holt's tenure as Slayer's second guitarist, he sometimes felt like he was neglecting his main band, Exodus. As honored as he was to be in Slayer, a group he had loved since their first album, 1983's *Show No Mercy*, he wished he had more time to spend with Exodus, the group he had played with since high school and for which he assumed the primary songwriter role after Kirk Hammett left in 1983 to join Metallica.

While Holt wrote and played on all of Exodus' 2014 studio album *Blood In, Blood Out*, he couldn't completely dedicate himself to the group. He missed shows that coincided with Slayer gigs (Heathen's Kragen Lum filled in on those tours). And, if Holt hadn't been in Slayer for nearly nine years, Exodus likely would have released another album between *Blood In, Blood Out* and their new release, *Persona Non Grata*. There's no question that Holt was a major asset to Slayer when they needed someone to fill in for the late Jeff Hanneman. But some fans and former members of Exodus argue that his years with Slayer jeopardized his main band.

Gary Holt's hunger to return to Exodus shines through the jagged riffs and crushing rhythms of *Persona Non Grata*, their first studio album since 2014's *Blood In, Blood Out*

"Slayer were great. They treated me like family from day one," says Holt from his home in Northern California. "But, yeah, every day there were moments when I missed doing Exodus. The saving grace was that I knew there was a light at the end of the tunnel, and then it would be all Exodus, all the time. Plus, I had the support of all my guys. And they had my support to do shows without me and tour regularly. But they're my brothers and I couldn't wait to be back. Two months after the Slayer tour ended, I was back on tour with Exodus. I barely even took a break."

Holt's hunger to return to Exodus shines through the jagged riff shards and crushing rhythms of *Persona Non Grata*. Rarely has he sounded as joyously entrenched in the band's visceral mix of aggressive thrash, old-school metal, and deft, fluid leads. In Slayer, he was a hired hand. In Exodus, his hands define every palm-muted chug, crystalline arpeggio, and tactical rhythm shift. With the exception of "Slipping into Madness," which was written by second guitarist Lee Altus, Holt wrote the framework for every song on *Persona Non Grata*.

"I was so stoked to be doing another Exodus record," Holt says. "I had no intention of doing anything that wasn't 100 percent killer. We worked really hard on this album and I think it shows. There's not one track I'm not totally happy with."

Unlike the many bands halted in their tracks by the Covid epidemic, Exodus used their time in lockdown to tighten riffs, maximize dynam-

"EVERY DAY THERE WERE MOMENTS WHEN I MISSED DOING EXODUS. THE SAVING GRACE WAS THAT

ics and nail the solos. Holt was especially obsessive with his leads.

"When it's time for me to do solos, I sometimes feel super-pressured, and like I'm running out of time because I'm doing so much," he says from past album experience. "I'm writing the music, finishing lyrics. I'm there for the drum tracking and then I'm laying down my guitars. I'm there to help Jack [*Gibson*] work on the bass, I'm working with [*Steve*] Zetro [*Souza*] on vocals. So when it comes time for me to do my leads, I feel like I haven't had any time to work anything out, so I just improvise. This time I had the extra time to really work on my shit so I was super happy with all the solos."

From a musical perspective, Holt has plenty of reasons to be thrilled with *Persona Non Grata*, an unrelenting barrage of fire, fury, shock and awe coupled with burrowing guitar earworms. Holt is even happier that Exodus overcame some harrowing health scares and personal issues some of the members faced between the time *Persona Non Grata* was finished and the day it came out. In an in-depth conversation, he discussed the creative process for *Persona Non Grata*, the one advantage of the Covid lockdown, drummer Tom Hunting's battle with stomach cancer, his own struggle with alcohol, and how the new album marks a new beginning.

Exodus released *Blood In, Blood Out* in 2014, which was more than seven years ago. Did you write much of *Persona Non Grata* between then and the end of the Slayer tour?
I'm always writing riffs, but I don't get serious about it until it starts getting close to the time to start working on the next album. Toward the end of the Slayer run, I got more into writing mode. And then when Slayer ended their tour and [*drummer*] Tom [*Hunting*] and I got together in July 2020 things started taking shape.

Did you and Tom work on songs on the fly or did you bring pre-written material into the writing sessions?
Before we got together, I sent Tom a bunch of recordings of me riffing out on the voice recorder on my iPhone. Some of the songs were pretty much done, some were nearly done, and some were just riff ideas. Then, there were others I thought were done but they ended up completely different. Those kinds of changes happen when you start jamming. So, for a long time it was Tom and me and a half stack and a drum kit in a room just like the way we used to do it back in the day.

Was locking yourself away with Tom, some guitars, amps and a drum kit the way you stayed productive during the lockdown?
That was one of the beautiful things about Covid. There aren't many, but it gave us time to work on the sound we wanted, and without interruption, because we didn't have any summer touring plans. At first, we didn't think we were going to have time to work on the album at all because inevitably something gets offered to you and you have to take it. You can't always prepare for it because there are occasions when an artist drops out of a festival, so even if you're not booked for anything you fill in because the money's good. Or, you have to split the record up into different sessions between tours, which I don't like to do. We didn't have any of that. We shipped an entire Pro Tools studio with unlimited inputs to the place we were working up in the mountains and it was awesome. We were uninterrupted for the whole year and we had one sole focus — Exodus.

Do you delete a bunch of stuff from your iPhone riff bank before you start piecing songs together?
I keep everything. I always like to have a ton of stuff in there so if I'm working on a new song I don't even bother looking for particular parts because I get kinda ADD. I'll write a new riff and completely forget about something else that I wrote that fits right in with what I'm doing. I need someone like Tom to hear it and say, "Whoa, let's revisit that." I'm like, "No, I got other stuff now." But he'll convince me to dig back into my phone and it ends up being some of the best stuff on the record.

Do you use any recording software or just hold the phone right up to the amp?
I wrote the whole song "Prescribing Horror" on my GarageBand program — drums and everything with Toontrack EZDrummer. I'd forgotten all about it. And Tom said, "Hey, we should check that one out again" so we imported everything into ProTools and re-edited it without re-recording it. Then we listened to it on real speakers and retracked everything except the clean guitar and the melody solo, which came straight off my GarageBand laptop demo. They sounded fine so we didn't see any reason to redo them. It wound up being fucking dark and super-scary, which we really liked.

Was there a point where you were struggling to find your footing and then the wheels clicked and it was all-systems-go?
Sometimes that happens. Tom watched me struggle with finishing "The Fires of Division" for weeks. I just wasn't happy with it. And then I wake up one morning and start playing, and Tom walks out with a cup of coffee, hears me and goes, "That's it!" Once I stopped fighting myself and changed the key, it opened the whole song up and I wrote all the other stuff around it. I said, "Let's go out there right now!" We fired up a click track for it and I just plowed through the whole song, including the ending. The whole harmony section was improvised on the spot with a click. I hadn't written that yet. [*Our engineer*] Steve Lagudi was about to hit stop, and I said, "Don't hit that button! I'm just rolling with it and I wanna see what happens." And I just wrote it on the spot.

Did you write any of the riffs on *Persona Non Grata* with the intention of using them for Slayer?
Not one. This is all 100 percent Exodus. [*Slayer guitarist*] Kerry [*King*] wrote all the music on [*their final album*] *Repentless*, anyway. None of these riffs were ever submitted or planned for that. I don't think any of it would really fit in a Slayer song.

Did it take a little while to get the Exodus machine up and running after prioritizing Slayer for so long?
It was easy — and we were so into it. Tom [*Hunting*] and I played music together for 40 years. We have a language that can't be replicated. So, I was right back at home when we started jamming, and shit started happening right away.

How did your revamped ProTools setup allow you to be more creative and get better sounds?
A lot of people work with your home-based ProTools interface, and even the really good ones only allow two simul-

I KNEW THERE WAS A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL, AND THEN IT WOULD BE ALL EXODUS, ALL THE TIME"

JAVIER BRAGADO/REDFERNS

taneous tracks. There's always one dedicated to the emergency DPI. And that means I've only got one mic to work with. This time, we were able to try out a million mikes. We ended up going with the most old-school combination of a [*Sennheiser MD*] 421 and a [*Shure*] SM57 with a 1980s combo. But we had a dozen mikes up on the two cabs, trying them all out and we could record them all at once and just mute channels and listen to them in the context of the track. It was awesome.

Did you have "A" and "B" studios going at the same time so Zetro could work on vocals without interruption?

We had three studios going. We had a home base studio where Tom and I were tracking drums. And then I'd drive to the rental house which is where Jack's portable rig was. He and I would work out bass parts and I would record horrible versions of the songs just for timing and phrasing cues. Then we'd do the same with Zetro for vocals before we all went to the third studio, where we finished everything. So we were recording in two locations with three studios.

Was there much experimentation with amps and guitars?

We were up in the Mountains at Thompson, which was a three-hour drive from my house. So, I had to really narrow down what I was taking. I took three of my favorite ESPs and a Gibson Flying V tuned to drop C that I used just for rehearsals. My main guitar was a 1983 Yamaha SG 3000, and it sounds so amazing. I used it on every rhythm track on the album. It just made these crushing, super huge, heavy, thick sounds. More importantly, it stayed in tune! It was like a bell. It was just so perfectly intonated.

What amps and cabs did you use?

I used the Marshall Jubilee reissues and boosted the input. To me, that's half the joy. I think of recording guitars as achieving a tone and chasing it. There's a lot of great modern, high-gain amps out there right now. But most people who use them all sound the same. There's not a lot of individuality out there. I put tubes on super overdrive with the drive on zero and the level on 10 and my signature Pro-Tune Mid Boost pedal in the front of it. We bought a couple of vintage BBE Sonic Maximizers on eBay that we put in the loop just to bump up the low end until it was just right. That amp is so good. From Tom and I rehearsing to tracking guitars in the studio, I didn't touch a knob. It was done. The tone was exactly how we wanted it.

You have a couple guest solos on the record.

[*Former Exodus guitarist*] Rick Hunolt and [*Heathen's*] Kragen Lum both did a guest solo on "Lunatic-Liar-Lord." There were two long solos so we split them each in half. Rick did the first, I did the second and Kragen took the third and fourth, which worked really well.

Was it a reunification of sorts to have Rick recording with Exodus for the first time since 2004's *Tempo of the Damned*?

"I HAD ONE JOB IN SLAYER AND ONE JOB ONLY. GO OUT, PLAY KILLER, BANG YOUR HEAD AND

Rick's always a part of this family. He's one of my closest friends on earth and we talk all the time. When he left the band, it was because we go to the point where you're out on tour and you're making no money and you have young kids at home. He wanted to be home for his family and we respected that. We recently flew him in for two shows, and [*drummer*] John Tempesta filled in for Tom [*Hunting*]. We all had the best time. So we asked him to contribute a solo on the record and he killed it.

Any chance Rick will play with you on tour this year?
Probably only for hometown shows. We like to bring Rick out to jam and it's fun. But Lee [*Altus*] has been the other guitarist of Exodus [*since 2005*]. There's no replacing him. But all the other ex-members are always welcome to jam. We've done whole shows based around it before and it's a lot of fun. I want to do that again.

On April 13, Tom announced on Facebook that he had squamous cell carcinoma of the stomach, an often deadly form of cancer. Was there any indication that he was sick when you worked on *Persona Non Grata*?
Not from the way he was playing. He put on the performance of a lifetime. He just dominated. He was seeing doctors during the recording because he was experiencing unexplained weight loss. He knew something was weird because he was eating normal. Tom's a big guy and he was weighing in at less than me. He's four inches taller than me, probably. So he knew something was up, but he didn't feel sick.

Did he start cancer treatment while he was finishing up the album?
We were done with the record and then he got some tests. He called me up and gave me the news. I had a total emotional breakdown. He's my best friend and the prognosis was very grim. He went through chemo and he had a gastrectomy [*a procedure in which part or all of the stomach is removed*]. He was scheduled to do another round of chemo a few months ago and then his doctors told him he didn't need it. He's a strong guy and he kicked cancer's ass and hopefully, he stays that way.

That's great news. Is he in remission?
I guess you'd call it remission. He doesn't need chemo, but they're giving them immunotherapy because the chemo can break down your immune system.

He rejoined you onstage at the Aftershock Festival in Sacramento on October 7, 2021.
He completely destroyed the place. It was dominant, it was emotional and the crowd was insane. We played one of the best 40-minute sets we've ever done in our lives.

About four months before that show you posted on social media that you were giving up alcohol. Why did you decide to quit and has it been a battle to stay on the wagon?
Here's the deal. I'm the most positive, upbeat kitten-loving dude you'll ever find. If you listen to Exodus, it sounds like I need therapy. But the music is my therapy. At first, that's how I dealt with all the madness of the world. The only thing we had any control over was our creativity. We couldn't control how bad Covid was or when we could go back on tour or even go to a restaurant. But we could control Exodus and that's the way I coped at first.

Then what happened?
During the summer, I started coping with alcohol and I saw a potential problem coming. I didn't drink every day, but when I did, I'd get depressed. Before that, I was always a happy drunk. I'd been drinking since I was 16, and in the Eighties we were all way out of control. But in my later years, I chilled out a lot. I never drank much at home. I didn't even drink that much on tour. But during Covid, there I was at home sitting outside in a dark place drinking 12 10-percent alcohol beers — strong shit — and just pounding them. Eventually, my wife helped me realize I needed to stop 'cause I was getting depressed, bitter and angry, and that wasn't me. And now I've never felt better.

Congratulations. Do you ever get tempted to grab a drink?
Yeah, but fortunately I've found that there's really excellent alcohol-free beer out there and I found a company that makes a great oatmeal stout. They've got other flavors, too. So, if it's hot outside and I'm craving a beer I'll just drink that. I do not miss getting drunk. I do not miss getting buzzed. I don't miss the taste of beer because I'm perfectly happy drinking my buzz-free beer. And I didn't need rehab or anything.

Is there anything you miss now about Slayer's demise?
Yeah, man. I've been friends with those guys since we were kids. And, I had one job in Slayer and one job only. Go out, play killer, bang your head and play a little bit of a guitar hero role. One thing I was shocked with was how many Slayer solos there are. There are songs that I played three solos in and at one point I'd be like, "Alright, I'm just going to go shred and play this one behind my head 'cause I'm out of ideas." [*Laughs*] But yeah, it was fun and relatively easy. I wear a lot more hats in Exodus and have a lot more responsibility. Fortunately, I love it — but it's not always easy.

For years, Slayer were stone-faced and ruthless onstage. As their career drew to a close, it looked like you all started getting emotional.
Oh, man. During that last performance of "Angel of Death," when I raised my guitar over my head during the solo, I was fighting off tears. That was emotional because I knew that was the last time I was ever going to do it. There were people in the crowd with tears in their eyes at the end of the show, too. And then Kerry does the chain drop at the end of the show. It was the end of an era right then and there.

Kerry King has said in interviews that he thinks the band stopped too soon.
Did the band stop too soon? That's for them to decide. I know that's how Kerry feels. Maybe [*bassist and vocalist*] Tom [*Araya*] doesn't agree. I think the band had a lot more music in them, but you know what they say. It's better to go out too soon than too late. The band went out firing on four cylinders. Better to do that than milk it for a few more years when everybody knows you're milking it. That would tarnish the legacy of the band. This way they went out in peak form. Maybe that's best. GW

[*facing page*] Holt performs with Exodus in Madrid, Spain, February 28, 2020. The medieval woodcut design on his ESP Holt Eclipse is by Hutchinson Guitar Concepts

PLAY A LITTLE BIT OF A GUITAR HERO ROLE... BUT, YEAH, IT WAS FUN AND RELATIVELY EASY"

TIPTON'S TWO CENTS:

"[Richie Faulkner] never puts that guitar down. I spoke to him briefly two or three nights ago, and he sounded good. But you have to be careful with any problems like that because what you need is rest. And what he wants to do is play the guitar, and that's not always restful"

— GLENN TIPTON, APRIL 2022 *GW*

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

RICHIE FAULKNER

On September 26, 2021, while onstage with Judas Priest in Louisville, 42-year-old guitarist Richie Faulkner came incredibly close to dying. Lucky for all of us, he's here to tell the tale — and what a tale it is...

By Jon Wiederhorn

FOR JUDAS PRIEST guitarist Richie Faulkner, September 26, 2021, started out like any other gig day. The band was scheduled to play support to Metallica on the fourth and final night of the Louder Than Life Festival in Louisville, Kentucky. Faulkner was a little tired, but after two and a half weeks on tour, that was hardly unusual.

He poured himself a vodka and Red Bull and downed it. Combined with the adrenaline of playing to a sold-out crowd, he soon perked up and was excited to take the stage dressed in trademark studded black leather vest and black leather pants, and wielding a trademark Gibson Flying V. Judas Priest opened with "One Shot at Glory" from 1990's *Painkiller*, then launched into "Lightning Strike" from 2018's *Firepower*. By the third song, the 1982 anthem "You've Got Another Thing Comin'," they were locked in and celebrating career-spanning songs on their long-delayed (due to Covid) 50th Anniversary tour.

The hour-long set flew by, and as Judas Priest played the last song of the night, the hyper-charged "Painkiller," Faulkner continued rocking out, shaking his leonine locks and alternating between joyful smiles and metal grimaces. Halfway through the song, the grimaces became real. Faulkner felt his chest tighten. Moderate pain and pressure swept through his midsection. He felt disoriented and short of breath. Even so, he was driven by devotion and managed to play a dextrous whammy bar-enhanced solo and even raised his guitar to the sky. As vocalist Rob Halford delivered the final vocal salvo, Faulkner exited the stage and collapsed into a chair.

"I needed to finish the song, but I had the presence of mind to come back from the edge of the stage just in case I passed out from fatigue," Faulkner says in a Zoom interview six months after the Louisville show. "Luckily, Metallica was headlining that night or we would have played a full set and I probably would have dropped dead onstage."

Paramedics urged Faulkner to go to the hospital. But the guitarist felt constricted in his tight leather and wanted to remove his stage clothes before figuring out what to do next.

"If I had known my heart had split open and I was bleeding into my chest cavity, I might have handled it a bit differently. But I had no idea," Faulkner says. "I got my jeans and T-shirt on. I didn't think it was anything really serious and I didn't want to make a fuss. I probably would have kept going if we did an encore."

When he got back to the medics and his girlfriend Mariah Lynch (daughter of Dokken star George Lynch), Faulkner said he thought he was just exhausted and instead of going to the hospital, he wanted to drive two and a half hours back home to his place near Nashville.

Judas Priest's Richie Faulkner performs at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino, Las Vegas, March 13, 2022. "It feels like a lifetime ago when I was onstage in Kentucky dancing with the Reaper," he says

"I LIKE TO JOKE THAT I'VE LITERALLY GOT A HEART OF METAL. BUT I KNOW HOW SERIOUS IT WAS,

"The original plan before the show was to drive home and have a few days off at the house to spend with our new baby," Faulkner says. "Then I was going to fly to Denver to meet the band and carry on with the tour. I figured I could still do that. I'd been healthy before the show, so I was like, 'Obviously, it's not a big deal. Let's just get in the car and go back home. It's going to be okay.' There's no question I would have died in the car on the way back home if I even made it to the car."

At the insistence of the medics, Lynch convinced Faulkner to get into a waiting ambulance. As it turned out, his aorta couldn't have exploded in a better location. The Highland Festival Grounds at the Kentucky Expo Center is five miles from the Rudd Heart and Lung Center at UofL Health — Jewish Hospital, which has one of the best and most well-equipped cardiac units in the country.

With six months of hindsight, the guitarist fully recognizes that he nearly lost everything on September 26 and now he has more appreciation for his family, friends and band. At the same time, he says it seems like the incident in Louisville happened so long ago it has little bearing on his life today.

"It's so weird because I'm feeling good. I'm feeling strong," he says. "It feels like a lifetime ago when I was onstage in Kentucky dancing with the Reaper. I know I'm incredibly fortunate to be here. I know that. But it's still hard to believe it really happened."

During a lengthy, revealing Zoom call, Faulkner talks about being completely blindsided and disoriented by his aortic dissection, the extent of damage to the arteries around his heart, how surgeons rebuilt him with powerful metal, and his post-op struggle to regain the strength and stamina he needed to tour again with Judas Priest. He also addresses the announcement that the band was going to tour as a four-piece, the unique writing relationship Faulkner has with Glenn Tipton, the follow-up to *Firepower*, and plans to work on a side project beyond the realm of Priest.

Ironically, at 42, you are the youngest member of Judas Priest and your bandmates are elder statesmen. Yet, despite various illnesses and accidents some of the other guys have suffered since you joined, you're the only one who has come so close to dying. Did you have any personal or family history of heart ailments?

No, nothing. It came right out of the blue. I think there was high blood pressure pounding on the walls of my aorta, and over time it weakened the walls without anyone knowing. And then, finally, it just burst.

That's terrifying. Were there any warning signs?

Not that I could tell. They say people who are having heart problems sometimes have backaches, but I'm 42 and I've been running around onstage forever. So my back has been hurting daily since I was about 35. In February 2020, I had a physical in England and the doctor checked my blood pressure and said it was a little high, but she said it was okay and there was nothing to worry about. The Kentucky show was in September the following year, and there was never any indication of any problem before I got halfway through "Painkiller."

What do you remember from the time you got into the ambulance?

Everything was a whirlwind. You're on a stretcher being walked down the corridor and you've been pumped full of adrenaline because you're going under and you might not come out of it. And you have no idea what's going on. Then, if you're lucky, you wake up in a recovery room.

What did doctors do when you were on the operating table?

They knew I needed open-heart surgery and thought they were going to have to do a four or five hour operation. So they opened me up and saw I had an aortic aneurysm [*a ballooning of the aorta, the main artery that carries blood from the heart through the chest and torso*]. It had ballooned and ruptured [*causing blood to flood through the tear with such force the inner and middle layers of the aorta split*]. So it was a lot more severe than what they anticipated, and the procedure took them 11 hours. I had to have four blood transfusions.

Were they confident they could fix the damage and stitch you back up?

Honestly, they weren't sure. Partway through, they had someone come out and tell my other half to call for my family to come to the hospital because they didn't know if I was going to make it out. When my aorta dissected, the artery split all the way to my waist. And then there are the arteries that go up to your brain and it split and dissected all the way up there as well. So the whole thing just exploded. It's really amazing they were able to bring me back.

Did they fix everything?

They repaired the rupture and the aneurysm. There was no heart attack to fix. My heart was completely fine. It was the aorta that burst, so they repaired it with a mechanical valve. And they repaired other parts of my heart with bits of metal since the dissection caused a lot of damage. I'm more metal now than ever. I like to joke that I've literally got a heart of metal. But I know how serious it was and I know I would have died if I didn't have these miracle doctors. But they couldn't repair everything. The bit [*of artery*] that goes down to my waist is still dissected. It's just not life-threatening. Nothing's going to happen in the short term.

Why didn't they repair that during the operation?

They couldn't keep me under anesthesia any longer. Otherwise, I might have suffered brain damage. So they had to stitch me up and now doctors keep an eye on it. If you monitor your heart rate and your blood pressure, it can scar over and you can be fine. But if it gets bigger over time, they can operate on it and fix it then.

Considering your aorta split onstage and you were bleeding out, it's amazing you were able to get to the hospital in time.

One question I had for the doctors was how I was able to go on for so long, because, yeah, once these things rupture you've usually got minutes and you're gone. They think that maybe my adrenaline was so high because we were playing and that my heart was pumping hard enough and fast enough to keep me going long enough to get pumped up with more adrenaline and keep me going to the hospital. So I can literally say the power of heavy metal kept me alive long enough to save my life. I was literally, possibly saved by metal.

Do you remember waking up in

AND I KNOW I WOULD HAVE DIED IF I DIDN'T HAVE THESE MIRACLE DOCTORS"

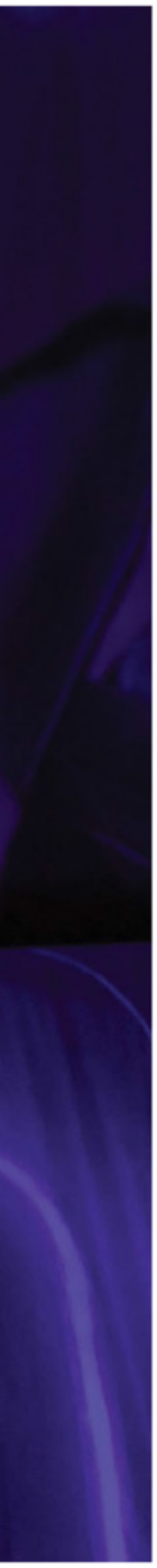
ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

the ICU?
I opened my eyes and there were tubes sticking out of me everywhere. That was really weird. But I realized I was still here. I was in the ICU for four days and I made a gradual, day-by-day recovery.

Can you explain the recovery process?
I was in [*the*] hospital for 10 days, which they said was really good since a lot of people with my condition are there for a month. But it was hard. I had to stand up not long after they cut me open, and that wasn't fun. They made me walk, and I couldn't because your muscles atrophy and you've got no strength left in your legs or arms. I had to relearn how to walk. After a few days, you can do 10 steps with the walker and you're exhausted. It's awful but you've got to do all these things to gradually build up your strength. And you have all these breathing exercises as well because your lungs deflate when you're lying down and you've got to do them to prevent pneumonia. That was the most painful because your chest cavity hurts like hell. You have a big scar up there that they sewed together and every time I breathed in, even a little bit, it hurt. For these lung exercises, I had to breathe as hard as I could. And then, hopefully, you don't sneeze or cough, 'cause that's just the end of the world.

Were you going stir crazy while you were in the hospital?
I was determined to get out, but they obviously won't let you go until they're satisfied with your recovery. After 10

"I CAN LITERALLY SAY THE POWER OF HEAVY METAL KEPT ME ALIVE LONG ENOUGH TO SAVE MY LIFE"



days, they said I could leave and I continued my recovery at home. I'm sure the combination of my stubbornness and determination helped me heal faster. And I think my youth was on my side. I'm relatively young for this kind of thing. I'm not a smoker, I'm not a big drinker. But at the end of it all, I'm the luckiest man in the world. Some people who have aortic dissection lose their arms or legs or they don't make it. I'm the most fortunate person that's ever lived. I'll be on medication for the rest of my life, but that's a small price to pay.

Did you have a guitar with you in the hospital or was playing again not even a concern at that point?
I didn't have a guitar and there's no way I could have played it while I was in hospital. But one of the first things I worried about was whether I would still be able to play. When I woke up in the ICU I think one of my first questions was, "What's happening with the tour and what are we going to do?"

What did they tell you?
They told me I was in the ICU and obviously the tour wasn't still going on. It's kind of funny that my first concern was about the tour, but I think a large part of anybody's recovery is pushing yourself to get back to who you are. I wanted to recover for my family and my daughter. Getting back home and getting the guitar back in my hands was part of what I needed to do to get back on track and to give me the strength to keep going.

How long did it take you after you got home to pick up a guitar again, and were you able to play right away?
About four days after I got home, I tried to play. That was two weeks after it happened and that was hard. You want everything to be exactly the way it was, but you've been through this intense trauma. You don't know if you've lost too much blood to your brain and if your fingers will ever be able to function like they did. I was determined but I was also worried.

When was it clear you could play again?
It took a little while. I'd work at it and sometimes it would get a little bit easier, and that made me feel a bit better. And sometimes I was tired or just not focused and it was hard and I got frustrated. But I kept going and it got to a point where it kept getting easier. That gave me this sense of accomplishment and kept me going because I realized there was a light at the end of the tunnel.

Have you had to change your lifestyle or diet since your brush with death?
The good thing is my heart is fine. So the most important thing is to keep my blood thin enough to pass through the mechanical valve. I've had to cut out broccoli, Brussels sprouts, spinach — all leafy greens. But I can have meat, carrots, potatoes and ice cream. That works just fine for me. I have to watch my salt levels and keep an eye on my blood pressure and heart rate. And I'm on the blood thinner, Coumadin, which prevents blood clots. As long as the blood doesn't get too thick and start to clot, they said I can even have a couple of drinks every now and again.

Before the tour resumed, the band issued a statement that mentioned the 50th Anniversary shows would continue with you as the sole guitarist. That surprised a lot of people, including second guitarist Andy Sneap.
Andy has been fantastic standing in, but I think we've never really thought about who is going to either replace Glenn, or who is going to be the permanent road guitarist. Obviously, Glenn is still in the band. But the question we were asking ourselves was, can we have a permanent stand-in or will we do something else?

Was a tour without a second guitarist going to be a test for the latter?
Well, Rob called me one day and he said, "Falcon, would you be able to handle all the guitars?" I think he had mentioned something like that on the socials a few days earlier. I said, "Yes, I think so." He said, "It might be cool if we went to being a four-piece like we did in the beginning because then we wouldn't be replacing Glenn. That might be the solution." I said, "Well, whatever you want to do, Boss. If that's what everyone wants, I'm up for it." I really thought it would have sounded great. We all did. I went out and bought four harmonizer pedals to try to build up the sound. We didn't need any of them in the end.

Faulkner — with his ubiquitous Gibson Flying V — and Rob Halford on the final night of Priest's *Firepower* world tour at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, June 29, 2019

Were you surprised how fans reacted to the initial statement? Even Andy issued a statement suggesting he was surprised by the decision.
It just shows how passionate people still are about Priest. If they didn't care, we would've really been in trouble. But they cared an awful lot, and they expressed how they felt — and we listened. It was the only way to go. And, at the end of the day, I think Andy wants to be a part of it and wants to help out wherever he can. So he was disappointed but respectful of the original decision to tour as a four-piece. And he was happy when we changed our minds. He has always said he's a big fan of the band and he'll do whatever we need.

Glenn said the band wrote some new material for the next album before Covid hit. Sadly, he has Parkinson's and can't play like he used to, but he can still write music. When you work together now, does he explain how he wants you to play a riff or a part? Or does he demonstrate what he wants by playing it as well as he can and then having you further develop it?
Both, really. It depends if he's having a good day or a bad day. He's always got parts in his head and will try to communicate by telling me how to do it or showing me an example. Sometimes, he does stuff on his own and then presents the idea after he's worked on it for a bit. If we're doing something together he might say, "Try this or try that." Glenn's challenges have affected him, but as long as you've got his creative spark and ideas, and he's involved, that's all you can ask for — that excitement from him and his input.

Are you taking more of a writing role now with the band than you did on *Firepower*?
I think it will be the same. Before the pandemic, me, Rob and Glenn did a session together and we got down some great ideas. But then during the shutdown, because of the separation, I think we've done more on our own. Usually we're more collaborative. So it will be interesting to see how this one comes out because of all the individual ideas that have come up.

SUZANNE CORDEIRO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Faulkner onstage with Judas Priest in Cedar Park, Texas, March 20, 2022. "We're still looking for a window to get together. We've got songs in demo stages, so we're off to a good start," he says

When will you re-enter the studio?
We're still looking for a window to get together. We've got songs in demo stages so we're off to a good start. There's definitely enough material for a record — probably more than enough. Now we have to get them all to the next stage.

Do you have more potential Priest riffs to bring to the table than you had when you started the album?
Yeah, I'm always writing bits and pieces and putting stuff together. Sometimes they're Priest-like and sometimes they're not. It's funny because sometimes you write stuff you think would never work in the band, but then you put it forward in a session and it becomes Priest. Glenn puts a little twist on and Rob adds his ideas and there you go. On *Redeemer of Souls*, "Crossfire" was something I didn't think would work, but I showed it to the guys anyway and it became a pretty cool track.

Despite the care you took with social distancing and immunizations, you caught Covid shortly before returning to the road for the 50th Anniversary tour. Were you in an immuno-compromised state because of your aortic dissection?
I've been working on building a studio with a friend of mine. We were both isolating with our families and I had my immunization shots and my booster. But yeah, I somehow got Covid. I think I got the [*Omicron*] variety because it didn't last too long. I didn't lose my taste and smell, but I had a bad cough. I had one bad night and then three or four nights when I felt like I was getting rid of it. But we've got a 19-month-old baby in the house and we wanted to protect her. She got it, anyway, but she was fine.

Has your daughter shown a gift for music?
Guitar runs in her family. Grandpa is George Lynch so she loves guitar. She loves Def Leppard's *Hysteria* and now she loves *Pyromania*, so she has gone up a level further toward metal. She's so much fun and she's got an attitude on her.

Do you and George get along well?
He's based in California so he comes over when he can, which is great. He's great with the baby. George has always been there at the top of the guitarists I liked. I first got into Judas Priest, Iron Maiden and Metallica. Then there was Eddie Van Halen, Vai, Satriani and Paul Gilbert. But George had this unorthodox way of playing. Everyone else tried to be everyone else, but he had a weird way of playing that you could identify right away. When he comes around and plays, he's still got a weird style that's really unique and you can't copy it.

Have you jammed with Grandpa George?
We did a couple of live jams — the Instagram live thing. We thought we'd talk for a couple hours, but he loves guitar and gear. We talked all night. But we didn't write anything together.

Do you want to do a solo album?
Yeah, but I'd like to do it more as a band thing. I wouldn't want it to be called Richie Faulkner's Rainbow. I worked on a project with a few people during the pandemic and we're in talks at the moment with labels. I don't want to give too much away, but when the pandemic hit I thought maybe it's time to get a batch of songs and get them into shape and put them out.

Will it be a metal album?
It's always hard to talk about your stuff without crawling up your own ass. I think it's heavy, but it's not as "metal." It's a bit more bluesy. You can hear that it's coming from a guitarist in Priest, but it's enough of a departure to sound like something outside of the band. There's some Hendrix references in there and stuff that's a bit more groove-oriented.

Has being on tour again and planning for future albums put you in a better mindframe than you were in before the aortic dissection?
Yes and no. I want to just be myself and do what I do and play with Priest and play guitar and be a dad. But I have more of an awareness now of what can happen to anyone at any time. That's scary, but it puts things in perspective and makes you appreciate what you have. It was such an emotional moment when I put my foot back on the stage in Peoria, Illinois, for the first date I played after my incident. To get up there and hear the fans cheering and showing their appreciation was like a celebration of everything I'm so lucky to still be involved with. So I know I have a lot to be thankful for. GW

"I'D LIKE TO DO IT MORE AS A BAND THING. I WOULDN'T WANT IT TO BE CALLED RICHIE FAULKNER'S RAINBOW"

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GUITAR WORLD

GUITARWORLD.COM POLL

Greta Van Fleet's Jake Kiszka with his SG-shaped 1961 Gibson Les Paul

ALYSSE GAFKJEN

THE HOTTEST NEW GUITARISTS IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW

AS VOTED BY YOU

YOU HEAR IT all the time in some circles: "The age of the guitar hero is dead" or "They just don't make guitar heroes the way they used to." It's all very interesting, and, in the end, all very false. The reality is, there's a whole new generation of "heroic" players out there — people who gleefully (and with great, unmatched skill) spread the gospel of the guitar on a daily basis, people who inspire untold numbers of would-be guitarists to pick up that strange, six-stringed thing that sits in a darkened corner of Uncle Henry's living room. Anyone with interest — and with access to a smart phone or a semi-smart computer — knows there are hordes of new guitar heroes out there, and — for this issue — we here at *Guitar World* proudly shine the spotlight on them. Our editorial staff, with help from the gang at GuitarWorld.com, crafted a list of nearly 75 "new generation" guitarists, i.e. talented players who weren't on our radar, say, six to eight years ago and who have had time to make a name — if not an entire online empire — for themselves. [*Editor's note: Obviously, someone like Wolfgang Van Halen has been appearing in GW's pages for years, but not as Mammoth MVH, who is essentially a new artist.*] We then put the list to a vote on GuitarWorld.com — a poll that collected thousands of votes in the spring (and even let voters fill in their own picks). In this issue, you'll find the results of our poll. We highlight the top 22 vote earners and then present the rest of the top 50 in list form. Dive in!

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59 ICHIKA NITO, WVH, SOPHIE LLOYD & 43 more!

1 JAKE KISZKA

TOP TRACKS

"Highway Tune"

"Black Smoke Rising"

The GRETA VAN FLEET guitarist — who dominated the hell out of our "hottest guitarist in the world right now" readers poll — discusses the state of guitar in mid '22, and what it's like to open for Metallica BY JOE BOSSO

JAKE KISZKA GASPS: "Wow, that's pretty incredible!" Speaking to us via Zoom from São Paulo, Brazil, the Greta Van Fleet axman has just been informed that he has been named the toppermost of the poppermost in *GW*'s "hottest guitarist in the world right now" poll — and by a wide margin. He takes a moment to let the news sink in, then says, "I'm honored and humbled. If anything, it offers me peace of mind knowing that what I'm doing is respected and appreciated by fellow guitarists."

It's now been five years since Greta Van Fleet burst out of their hometown of Frankenmuth, Michigan, amid a wave of press that anointed the young quartet "the next big thing" (and even a few hyperbolic headlines touted them as "rock's saviors"), so they're not newbies anymore. With two hit albums, a Grammy and thousands of shows under his belt, Kiszka reflects on how his world has changed.

"There's quite a difference between things being real versus how I imagined them," he says. "When I think about our trajectory, I remember how we felt at the beginning. We knew that we were onto something. We felt like we could make an impact on music — and rock 'n' roll, specifically — but we had zero idea that it would be this quick and exacerbated to this level. So it's been quite a ride. It's almost as if I blinked my eyes, and five years later, here we are."

None of this would be possible without the support of fans, and indeed, despite the barbs hurled recently by some of the same outlets that at first championed the band, Greta Van Fleet appears to be living the adage "success is the best revenge." "Our fans mean everything to us," Kiszka says. "They're the whole reason we do what we do. They're why we get up and go out the door. They motivate us. Even when we're writing music, I know I've got those people in my mind. I want to write music that reaches them."

He pauses, then adds, "I mean, we could be sitting at home and playing in our garage if it weren't for the people who love our music and come to our shows. So I have a lot to thank them for. And I'm especially grateful to the *Guitar World* fans. That's pretty incredible news."

We're speaking while your band is opening shows for Metallica in South America. What's it been like playing for huge crowds that might not be familiar with your band?

It's been pretty powerful. For us, getting in front of 60,000 or 70,000 people a night and playing before one of the great bands of history, it's a surreal experience. You can see people who know our music and are already fans — they jump around and get into it. Then you see the people who are just discovering us, and they're sort of entranced, like they're studying us. We bump into people after the shows at airports and other places, and we can tell there's a growing acceptance of us among the Metallica fans.

How do you see the state of the guitar in 2022?

It's interesting to consider where we are in the evolution of guitar playing; it's like each chapter is the next step in a story. Guitar playing is handed down from one generation to the next, and everybody leaves their own mark. For my generation, it's becoming a time when the gate is opening for a new kind of creativity and a type of guitar playing that can be wholly authentic or original. I spent my whole life trying to develop my own sound, and I think that's really important. I'm seeing a lot of respect among players in the guitar community. I'm even starting to hear the term "guitar hero" again, and that's great. There's a new generation on the way — with a new voice.

That said, for someone so young, your influences are a bit on the vintage side. Do you think that indicates a bit of a stasis in modern guitar?

I think it's like anything in popular culture: It eats its tail and comes back around and it's vomited up again in some alternative form. I learned to play the guitar from watching and studying the old masters because they were the best. I wanted to play like them, but at the same time I wanted to take it somewhere else. That can be hard for someone from my generation — so much has been done already. But that's sort of the way you have to approach it: What can we do now? So much groundwork has been laid, and now we get to study it and see how we can take it further.

When we last talked a year ago, I asked you about any new guitarists you were into. You mentioned Chris Turpin from Ida Mae. Anyone else you care to mention?

Yeah, sure. Devon Gilfillian is a great guitar player — new dude. And there's Cedric Burnside. He's probably not so much on the newer side, but I recently played a show with him and he's an incredible blues guitar player. He's the grandson of R.L. Burnside, so there's a lot of blues licks and stuff. Let's see, who else?... Tyler Baker from Goodbye June

is a great guitar player. There's a few people... Oh, Marcus King. I can't leave him out. He's amazing.

How would you say you're trying to push yourself as a guitar player these days? Are you trying to go beyond the typical pentatonic scale?
The really cool thing is that I'm in a position where the type of music we play and the platform we've created allows me to be multifaceted. The music itself puts me in a place where I can really expand outside the realm of what you might call "practical" guitar playing.

Can you give me an example?
Sure. I think it's really cool that I get to take something like "The Barbarians" and play a suspended pentatonic scale, which is an ancient Egyptian scale. Right away, you can tell it sounds different. I don't think we're playing 12-bar blues as much as we're crafting songs and curating tunes. I think that allows me a lot of opportunities to get outside of the typical pentatonic, which is typically seen inside 12-bar blues progression and that sort of thing.

I brought up that phrase "success is the best revenge," but it's true in your case. A lot of the critics who couldn't wait to get on board with your band quickly brought out the knives.
That's true. Here's the thing: I think doing exactly what we want exactly the way we want is the best revenge anyone could ever have. The fact that we're limited by absolutely zero confines or rules gives us the ability to be completely original and authentic. I think that's the greatest vengeance that anyone could ask for.

Back in the day critics weren't kind to Queen and Led Zeppelin. Do you take comfort in being in some very good company?
I do. That's great company to be in. If we weren't being criticized... I think good art should always be *highly* criticized. If something is too easily consumable, then everybody just likes it, you know? Like pop music.

"I'm even starting to hear the term 'guitar hero' again, and that's great," Kiszka says

ALYSSE GAFKJEN

On that note, are there any guilty-pleasure records you're listening to? Something that might surprise your fans, like, "I can't believe he's into that!"
Let me see... I've been listening to a lot of Chris Stapleton lately, which may seem unusual to people. I love Adele. Does she count as unusual?

Well, we're talking about great songwriters, great singers.
Yeah, definitely, and I study them. I mean, I like Third Eye Blind a bit. They've got a few songs that I dig. Oh, Imagine Dragons might be one. I've started listening to more things outside of the norm for me.

Now that you're a seasoned vet at 26, what advice do you have for younger players?
Everybody's journey is so different and unique. But if I had to boil it down to one thing, I would say persistence is a key point. Persistence and a dedication to your craft are two key elements that, no matter what you're doing, should sustain you — emotionally, spiritually and in a physical sense. Everything else isn't that important, really.

Beyond more touring, what's next for you guys?
We've got a lot coming. It seems like it's all been leading up to this singular point over the last two years. We've been collectively building an album and putting a tour together, and we're doing other things that are quite outside the box — I probably shouldn't mention that right now. But it's all coming to fruition, so we're looking at exciting times. I'm particularly interested to see how people react to what we do next.

We've still got a lot to accomplish — stories to tell, pictures to paint, mountains to climb. We're not going away anytime soon, but when we no longer have a story to tell, then we'll likely disband. But that's a long way off. There's a lot we want to imbue in culture and music, and again, specifically rock 'n' roll because it's where we come from. GW

2 BILLY STRINGS

TOP TRACKS

"Dust in a Baggie"

"Taking Water"

This 29-year-old BLUEGRASS BLAZER from western Michigan is a modern-day folk hero BY ALAN PAUL

BILLY STRINGS IS SIMPLY ONE OF THE MOST exciting young guitarists in decades. His career has exploded over the last couple of years, as he and his tight but loose trio of backing musicians have toured the country putting on remarkably dynamic shows that blow up anyone's vision of stodgy bluegrass music.

Grounded in the traditional music, Strings, a 29-year-old from western Michigan whose real name is Billy Apostol, starts with bluegrass in his covers and most of his original music, before taking solos on wild flights of fancy, armed with a large pedal board and no fear of exploring any tone or realm of music, ably supported and egged on by his backing trio of Royal Massat (bass), Billy Failing (banjo) and Jarrod Walker (mandolin).

His approach to bluegrass and the stellar interaction of his band are reminiscent of the original Allman Brothers Band — not in sound, of course, but in conception. Starting with a deep respect for and commitment to a folk music form, taking it far out in the solos and landing right back on the riff, right back in the traditional form. It's a groundbreaking approach that doesn't sound radical because it comes so easily and naturally to Billy and company. It is not part of an intellectual exercise, but just that rare combination of a totally dedicated free spirit and a highly skilled, disciplined musician. We're excited to see what comes next for Billy Strings, but first let's explore how he got here.

Your dad spent his last 30 dollars buying you a guitar because you wanted one so bad at age 4 or so. What happened then?

He took me home and he taught me G, C and D, and he gave me a capo. Once I learned those three chords, I could play a couple of bluegrass songs. I already had the rhythm; the right hand thing was already kind of going on. I just had to learn where to put my fingers with my left hand and once I knew that, I was off to the races. Especially with bluegrass, being that a lot of it is three chords, I-IV-V. If you have a capo, you can play G, C and D and play just about any bluegrass song in any key. It took me a couple years and by the time I was six or seven years old, I could play some tunes. I could hang on rhythm, and that was my deal. I never played any solos, that was all my dad. I was strictly his little rhythm player. I think that gave me a really good foundation because I learned music by ear. But listening so much for the other stuff... that's how I can tell what to do and where to go. I was really listening and paying attention to solos, how to build and play them, for a long time before I even attempted one.

You played some shows with [*Grateful Dead drummer*] Billy Kreutzmann last summer. It was the first time I had seen you play electric. Have you been playing a lot of electric guitar all along?

I never play electric guitar, man! I mean, I will occasionally if a band asks me to sit in and it's a blast, but not playing whole extended shows like that. I recently sat in with Widespread Panic and got my ass kicked all around that stage. It's fun because it's just so different. It's not that I don't know how to play electric guitar, because when I was a teenager I was in metal bands and before that I played a lot more classic rock with my brother. We were heavy into Hendrix, Zeppelin and the Beatles. But I pretty much abandoned the electric guitar when I was 17 and went fully back into flatpicking. And it's been sort of an extracurricular activity ever since. Bluegrass and flatpicking are definitely my thing and I'm most comfortable with an acoustic guitar in my hands.

But it's fun to try, and it takes a second to adapt. Like all of a sudden I have sustain! I can hold a note and let it ring for as long as I want, whereas on the acoustic guitar, I gotta play six notes or tremolo pick or something to make it sustain. With an electric, you can sing on the guitar. I was definitely faking it, but I always am! I mean, music is music to me. It doesn't matter what it is, I'm always flying by the seat of my pants. So it doesn't even matter if I'm playing with my guys who I play with every single night or someone I just met.

When you play those gigs on electric guitar, do you find that you come back to your acoustic playing differently?

Yeah, and vice versa. When I hop on the electric guitar, I play more acoustic guitar stuff, which I think comes across to more intensely guitar-focused listeners. Playing with Billy is like tossing out every single preconceived notion about what you've ever thought music was supposed to feel, sound, and be like. There's just no boundaries when it comes to playing with him. It completely throws all of that "fundamental" stuff that you need to make music work out the window and turns it into just having fun. It's like playing basketball, where you have to be totally alert and ready to catch the ball at any time. That shit was so fun, dude. I'll never forget that.

Now that your career has taken off so much, it just seems every tour you go out, it's bigger venues and more nights and you're selling out and headlining festivals. Does it matter or can you

"Bluegrass music is everything I live for," Strings says

JOSHUA BLACK WILKINS

get off as much in front of 50 people or 10,000?

Yeah, it certainly does. I'm not gonna lie and say that I would feel just the same playing in the coffee house for tips as I do at the Mission Ballroom. I mean, you walk out on stage in front of a couple thousand people and they're all screaming and they want to see some magic. That lights a fire under your ass. And it's always been my dream. When I was in middle school, I worshiped Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Kurt Cobain, James Brown, Bob Marley, Bob Dylan, just people who are larger than life. I still don't think those kinds of people exist anymore, but being on stage in front of thousands of people cheering is a childhood dream come true.

How important is it to you that your success in playing to all these crowds we're talking about has also probably turned a lot of younger people onto bluegrass?

I kind of take pride in that. A lot of the more traditional folks don't like what we're doing and say that we're not bluegrass and that we're junk or whatever. Of course, every band will have haters and people that love you. But I grew up on Bill Monroe's music, and I got a pretty good handle on it. If I could sit down with some of these people and have a conversation and maybe pick a couple songs, I think I could change their mind about what they think about me. Not that it really matters — and there's also a part of me that kind of enjoys pissing them off. [*Laughs*] It's like, "Whether you like it or not, I'm still gonna play 'How Mountain Girls Can Love' tonight in my concert, and there's probably gonna be a couple kids there who might learn about Ralph Stanley from me doing that." And that's a good thing! It's a big mission of mine. Whenever we play a show, I always add in some traditional bluegrass, because that's a part of who I am. It's how I learned how to play music, and that music saved my life. It's my heart and soul. Bluegrass music is everything I live for. I just happen to like other stuff too, and I'm so hard pressed to write a song anyways, I can't be picky about which genre it is. GW

3 CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM

TOP TRACKS

"Been Here Before"

"Outside of This Town"

This seasoned 23-year-old road warrior — who has toured with everyone from BUDDY GUY to VAMPIRE WEEKEND — is on a mission to spread the BEAUTY AND MAJESTY OF THE BLUES BY JOE BOSSO

THREE YEARS AGO, CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" Ingram set the music world on its ear. The 20-year-old guitar prodigy from Clarksdale, Mississippi, blew away critics and fans alike with his forceful debut album, *Kingfish*. Artists who have been called "the next big thing" have a way of coming and going, but Ingram (whom *Guitar World* hailed in 2019 as "the future of the blues") quickly proved that he meant business: In 2021, with *Kingfish* still riding high on the charts (where it would remain for a remarkable 91 weeks), he released his second album, *662*, an even richer and more accomplished outing than its predecessor, one that mixed elements of funk, R&B and jazz into his sturdy blues base. The record was another critical and commercial hit, and it even nabbed Ingram a Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Blues Album.

"It's all sort of breathtaking," says Ingram, now a seasoned 23-year-old. "The 'rush of fame' thing is beautiful, but I try not to get caught up in it. Even winning a Grammy — I can't let it go to my head. I have to remind myself that all of these positive things are just the result of a lot of hard work and dedication. I put a lot of hours into this, and while it's great to enjoy the fruits of the labor, I don't take anything for granted. I just want to be myself, make my music and tell my story the best I can. If I can stick to that plan, I feel like I'll have longevity."

Guitar World readers aren't always a consensus lot, but when it comes to Ingram they're in agreement: He's the real deal, and he's here to stay. Informed of his high standing in the "hottest guitarist in the world right now" poll, he lets out a joyous whoop, then says, "Wow, what a marvelous thing to be told. That's truly wonderful. To think that I'm up there with such incredible players, that just does my heart good."

Asked if he has any words for *GW* readers, Ingram says, "Oh, man, I just want to thank them from the bottom of my heart for thinking of me and including me alongside all the other great guitarists out there." He laughs, "'Hottest guitar player,' well, I'll do my best to stay hot, for sure."

You might be the only person to have toured with both Vampire Weekend and Buddy Guy.
That's crazy, right? Talk about two different worlds. Playing with Buddy Guy was definitely in my comfort zone, but Vampire Weekend took me to a new audience. It was a little nerve-racking for me at first, because that crowd was teenagers. I had no idea if they would go for what I do at all, but I've got to say, from the first show to the last, everything was amazing. I gained a whole lot of new followers from that tour.

Seeing as you're one of the hottest guitar players in the world, how do you see the state of the guitar in 2022?
Personally, I think the state of the guitar is great. I don't know if there's such an emphasis on the whole guitar hero thing anymore, somebody who's, like, the king of the mountain; there's too many great players out there making different sounds. Look at Yvette Young — she's got her own approach. There's a couple of people coming up in my lane, and it's cool to see them doing their thing. Everybody's got something unique to offer.

You're no mere blues tourist — you got into Muddy Waters and Robert Johnson when you were a little kid. Did your friends at school think you were from another planet?
[*Laughs*] Oh, most definitely. The other kids were listening to Top 40 and whatever else was hot, so they were kind of like, "What's that stuff you're into?" They didn't think I was a weirdo or anything, but they were taken aback. They weren't used to a cat who was into that style of music. But it's OK. Everything worked out in the end.

Being that your influences are from so way back, what do you think that says about where things are guitar-wise today?
I don't think it sends any kind of bad message. There's cool people doing new stuff, but I think it's important to study what came before you. In any kind of art, you need to look at what the greats did to try to build on it.

In previous interviews, you've spoken about your concerns for the blues — how it's not recognized as a true African-American art form.
That's right, I have. I try to keep everything rooted in the blues, and I want to educate people about it. A lot of folks don't know that the blues started as protest music. They think it's just this I-IV-V thing and that it's not serious. Blues is very meaningful music, and that's something I try to put across at all times.

How do you try to straddle the fence between tradition and pushing the blues forward?
I don't want to be a one-trick pony; I like trying to bring other elements into my music because I think that pushes it forward and keeps it fresh. But as long as blues is the foundation, I'll be all right.

On that note, you have been working some jazz into your songs, along with some sampled beats.
For sure. The younger crowd is into some different chord progressions and sampled beats. I like working in those elements

and doing some hip-hop. Some people might not agree, but for me, I think that works perfectly. It's like a direct path to entertaining the young crowd.

Anybody new you're listening to — guitar-wise and otherwise?
Oh, man, I like a lot. Let's see, I like Brandon "Taz" Niederauer. He's awesome. Who else? Of course there's Yvette Young and Eric Gales, and there's this band on the circuit called Dumpstaphunk. I really dig what they do. I'm way into Thundercat and Kendrick Lamar, and I've always loved the West Coast sound — Snoop Dogg. And always Prince.

Your soloing is very dramatic. I'm curious — as you play larger venues, do you notice your approach to soloing changing? Bigger solos for bigger places?
That's hard to say. I'm pretty passionate about what I do, so I always go for it. Yeah, you want to reach those people who are far in the back of the crowd, so I like to get big and dramatic for them. But I think that's what I always do.

You play a variety of guitars — Teles, Strats, Les Pauls, 335s. A lot of players stick to one model, but you mix it up.
I do. A few years ago, I sort of realized that I'm really into the humbucker sound, so I'm trying to stay in that lane. I play a Tele with humbuckers, and it sounds great. Everything I play has humbuckers now. That's the sound for me, anything with a humbucker.

What's on the horizon for you?
We've got plans for the next record. It's a little early to talk about right now because I'll be on tour for a while, but I'm looking at working with some new producers and writers. I've got some cool ideas. I'll get on top of that once I'm through touring.

OK, last question: Desert island album.
[*Laughs*] Wow, wow, that's a hard one! I'd say Curtis Mayfield's *Super Fly*. It's soulful and psychedelic — it pretty much hits all the spots for me, for sure. GW

JEN ROSENSTEIN

GUITAR WORLD
GUITARWORLD.COM POLL
HOW DO YOU PLAY LIKE A KINGFISH?
HEAD TO PAGE 64!

Ingram with his upcoming signature Fender Telecaster

4 SOPHIE BURRELL

TOP VIDEOS

"Shoot to Thrill - AC/DC"

"Tranquility"

[redacted]

Why this 23-year-old Brit's MILLION-PLUS social media followers can't be wrong BY AMIT SHARMA

WHEN *GUITAR WORLD* CONGRATULATES English guitarist Sophie Burrell on being voted one of the greatest players in the world right now, we soon get the impression she's as shocked as she is thrilled.

"It's pretty insane!" she grins, talking to *GW* via video conference, before very humbly explaining she never thought she'd be considered such a thing. The million-plus followers and subscribers she has amassed online, however, would perhaps beg to differ — high praise coming far and wide for her note-perfect videos covering artists as varied as John Mayer, Billie Eilish and Slipknot.

"I know I'm getting there, but I almost don't consider myself worthy because I haven't released much original stuff yet," continues Burrell, who sits among the youngest players in our list and is usually seen playing PRS guitars in her vibrantly lit home studio. "I do have some exciting things in the pipeline, though! Honestly, it's all very appreciated because I didn't try too hard to get votes, I just put it up on my Instagram stories and that's about it. It means a lot that people must have taken the time to vote, which is really sweet!"

[redacted]

When exactly did you decide to start documenting your guitar journey online?

It's been quite a while since I started. A lot of people assume I've been doing this for the last couple of years, but it's been closer to 10. I first started posting on the Facebook PRS Guitar Owners Worldwide group, sharing YouTube videos to that community. I was only 16, so really shy and self-conscious, but I was using it as a way to chat to other players. People were always kind and supportive. Then I started going to music college, posting more clips as well as getting into my first band. But I guess 2019 is when I really started ramping it up and trying to build a following. It's been a bit of a slow climb since then, a lot of people might not realize that, but because I've been working so much over that time it's kinda felt long and slow!

Which guitar players have inspired you most over the years?

If I had a top three, it would be Slash, David Gilmour and Mark Tremonti. Those guys feel like the core, the people that absolutely changed the game for me. And when I was just starting out, because I was singing and playing guitar, it was Avril Lavigne. [*Laughs*] I was obsessed! But then my brother started telling me to listen to "real music" and handed me a load of guitarists to check out. Slash was my first guitar god, I think. Kirk Hammett was up there too, at least early on. And as for David Gilmour, I was raised on Pink Floyd and was listening to them well before I'd even touched a guitar. My parents are huge fans so I was literally hearing them as a baby. And the Pink Floyd influence in me hasn't really come out until more recently. I was thinking, "David Gilmour is fucking great, why haven't I played his stuff yet?" So I did my first Pink Floyd video in 2020.

Your Pink Floyd videos really seem to capture the spirit of his playing, paying close attention to the phrasing, vibrato, etc.

I felt like I could replicate the parts well, not to say I'm anywhere near as good as David Gilmour. I just felt I really connected to his leads when playing them. And I love his bends, vibrato and sustain. Those tiny little details really speak to me a lot. Bends and vibrato are so much more than a technique, they can say everything about you as a player and carry all this personal information. It's not really something you work on, but it's definitely something every player should pay close attention to. It's easily one of the most important aspects of guitar, I think. I think subliminally those David Gilmour leads have always been a massive part of me, I just didn't realize until the last couple of years.

He can say so much with so little, tending to stick within a pentatonic framework.

Yeah, and though he typically stays pentatonic, he *rocks* it. *That's* exactly how you play that scale! And his vibrato is so interesting — it might be dead straight sometimes, or he might hold it and then give it a little wiggle, or something more intense. I didn't sit down and chart them all out, but I've heard those songs so many times that it just made sense to me in terms of what to use and when.

As for more modern players, who are your favorites?

I love what Plini, [*Polyphia's*] Tim Henson and Aaron Marshall [*Intervals*] are doing. I've been listening to a lot of Animals As Leaders and Chon as well. Back in the day, obviously it was all about Steve Vai and Yngwie Malmsteen, and it's great to see a newer movement of players taking off. Plini especially — I saw him supporting Periphery when he last came over and couldn't believe how insane he sounded. It's a serious skill to play technical music *that* well. I went home and the next day I wrote my first instrumental song, which is the only one I've released so far. And though he's been around for a while, I think Richie Kotzen is an absolute wizard. I've seen him a few times now and love the way his legato sounds. There was a while where he was the *only* guitar player I was listening to. His

music helped me with my hybrid picking... he's the man.

You posted a video documenting your journey learning "Cliffs of Dover" — a tune that's not for the faint-hearted!

It's a *hard* piece of music. I've only seen a couple of players nail it, including Nili Brosh. Mine is still far from perfect. I did that video, and my bandmate mentioned that Eric Johnson actually economy-picks a lot of those lines. I wish I'd realized... Economy picking is quite a new technique to me. I haven't really done it before and thought alternate picking was the only way! So I've been learning solos like "Hold the Line" by Toto, which definitely needs it for that fast bit.

Interestingly, those "Watch Me Learn" videos generally do quite well for me. I just filmed a new one on the new Polyphia song, "Playing God," which is horrifically hard! I'm going to be kind to myself and say Tim Henson did it on a nylon string and I was playing a steel string with high action. I actually gave up and admitted defeat! I got 38bpm out and had to stop for the day. I felt like I couldn't get any further and it's important for people to see that. It's very sweet that people like my playing so much, but I'm a perfectionist and always know I could be 100 times better than I am.

What can you tell us about your home recording setup?

Most of what you hear is me playing through plug-ins, even if I have my EVH head behind me. That head is very loud, and if I use it I go through my Torpedo Captor X, but I don't hook it up that much. It's more for live use. I'm mainly using Neural DSP right now. The Cory Wong plug-in is so good, as are the Plini and Tim Henson ones. I've also used STL Tones, BIAS FX and Ampli-Tube. Going direct is the easiest way for me to bosh videos out and not need a tube amp running in my room for hours and hours. It's all hooked up and ready to rock. All I need is that and my camera, then I sync it all up in post and I'm good to go. GW

"When people say tone is in the fingers, I totally agree," says Burrell, shown here with her PRS Custom 24 Wood Library

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5-22 AND THE REST...

GW rounds out the list of 2022's 22 hottest new guitarists — as voted by readers of GuitarWorld.com

Prolific YouTubers, on-the-rise rockers and the offspring of one of the best guitarists of all time BY AMIT SHARMA

5 LARISSA LIVEIR

WITH AN AUDIENCE of almost one and a half million on YouTube and Instagram alone, Brazilian guitarist Larissa Liveir has become known for her stunning renditions and arrangements of her favorite songs — from Metallica and Tame Impala to Dire Straits and Lorde. Uploaded only 10 months ago, her cover of the "Johnny B. Goode" intro has already surpassed a staggering 19 million views, with her acoustic take on Brian May's "Bohemian Rhapsody" solo not far behind. And her versatility stretches far beyond that, as demonstrated by her unaccompanied neo-soul version of "Careless Whisper" — which, as stated in the video description, was from an arrangement by online flamenco guitarist AcousticTrench. In interviews she has listed Slash, John Mayer, Santana and David Gilmour as her biggest lead heroes, while also showing admiration for the driving rhythms made famous by bands like Oasis, Pearl Jam and the Killers. Over the last year or so, she's mainly been spotted using T- or S-style electrics and acoustic models made by Seizi Guitars, as well as budget-friendly instruments like an Epiphone Les Paul Classic and Donner solidbody, confidently demonstrating just how much tone is available to players without any call for breaking the bank.

Top videos: "Time" (Pink Floyd), "Careless Whisper"

6 TRISTAN THOMAS (Florence Black)

AS ONE OF the breakout groups from the U.K. rock scene over the last couple of years, fresh from the momentum of releasing their debut album, *Weight of the Album,* back in September, Welsh three-piece Florence Black certainly seem to have a knack for thunderous riffs. Their modern metallic take on bluesy rock is one that will sit well with Alter Bridge and Black Stone Cherry fans, spiced with its own twists and turns. Being a power trio from Wales, singer and guitarist Tristan Thomas is well aware of the legacy left by local legends Budgie — whose biggest hit, "Breadfan," was famously covered by Metallica live and in the studio, with the American thrash heroes citing them as a major influence. Thomas himself has even played in a band with original Budgie sticksman Ray Phillips, so you could say he's learned from the best.

"I am a massive fan of Budgie," Thomas recently explained. "And that three-piece set-up always appealed to me. They were so loud and powerful and that really connected with me. Ray taught me a lot as I was growing up, so I thank him for taking me under his wing and showing me the ropes."

Top tracks: "Bird on a Chain," "One Way Out"

7 MORIAH FORMICA/ BELLA PERRON (Plush)

IT'S BEEN A whirlwind year or so for New York rockers Plush, who released their self-titled debut album in October and have spent much of their time on the road opening for industry heavyweights like Slash, Evanescence and Halestorm. Fronted by singer/guitarist Moriah Formica with Berklee graduate Bella Perron handling the leads, their alternative metal riffs and earworm melodies feel tailor-made for the big venues they've been getting a taste for. If all goes to plan, it won't be long until they're headlining themselves. "My main influences when it comes to phrasing are Joe Satriani, Slash and Randy Rhoads," Perron told *GW* in February. "I love how they all seamlessly blend melodic playing with complex licks, making every solo have such a unique character. That being said, when I was studying at Berklee my private instructor suggested that I study Bach violin sonatas, and this totally expanded my view on phrasing. I think it's important to branch out and study styles that you wouldn't normally gravitate to, because it can give you a broader outlook on playing."

Top tracks: "Hate," "Athena"

8 JARED JAMES NICHOLS

THE 33-YEAR-OLD Wisconsin blues rocker was named as one of Gibson's official Global Ambassadors in June last year, the same honor bestowed upon Slash a few years prior. Since then, he's dropped a new EP titled *Shadow Dancer* and been on the road with Zakk Wylde and Nita Strauss [*Stay tuned for more about that, by the way*], leaving jaws locked firmly on the floor with his powerful pentatonic bends and raw Southern-fried attitude. Nichols happens to occupy this issue's coveted lead Tune-Up spot, so be sure to turn back to page 19 for more info!

Top tracks: "Honey Forgive Me," "Nails in the Coffin"

9 WOLFGANG VAN HALEN (Mammoth WVH)

IT'D BE NO exaggeration to say great things were expected from Wolfgang Van Halen before he'd even released a note of music in his own band, thanks to the impressive bass work heard on final Van Halen studio album, 2012's *A Different Kind of Truth,* and 2015's *Tokyo Dome Live in Concert*. Be that as it may, few could've predicted what a formidable songwriter and frontman he'd turn out to be right from the off in his own group, as evidenced by Mammoth WVH's stunning self-titled 2021 debut. Grammy-nominated lead single "Distance," released in the aftermath of his father's passing in late 2020, was widely lauded for its melodic maturity, widening palm-muted tightness with open string resonance underneath one of the most heartfelt choruses of its year. "It's more about *how* it's being played than the notes that are being played," he told us, when quizzed on the heavily delayed guitar solo. "It's aggression more than melody. I think a lot of people who just listen for guitar solos didn't really understand the solo thinking it's just one note and it's like, 'Yeah, but if you listen to it contextually, it's what the song needed!' I do everything for the song. I don't want to try and overplay, it's down to what serves the song best."

Top tracks: "Don't Back Down," "Distance"

10 SOPHIE LLOYD

ENGLISH GUITARIST SOPHIE Lloyd's online performances have resonated far beyond the guitar community, with more than 1.5 million subscribers across her main platforms. In May, it was announced that she'd be joining Machine Gun Kelly's live band for the biggest shows of her career to date. For most of her video performances, which often integrate vocal melodies into her own unique instrumentals, covering everything from Britney Spears to Pantera, she can be seen playing her Purple Burst Kiesel signature with a Diezel VH4 and HT Stage 100H MkII behind her. The tones, however, are usually recorded direct through her interface. "It's all going straight into Logic," she tells *GW*. "At the moment I'm using the Nolly Neural DSP plug-in, which is the Periphery one. I find it has a *really* good lead tone, as well as really nice overdrives, delays and reverbs. The amps are more just for looks. That's probably why I get people in the comments going, 'Oh, you didn't even turn on your amp!' or whatever. [*Laughs*] It's all guitar software, to be honest, because the stuff you can get these days is absolutely amazing. Also, living in a small flat sometimes means you don't get to crank the Diezel or Blackstar as much as you want to... because the police *will* turn up!"

Top tracks/videos: "After Insanity," "Delusions"

[*from left*] Wolfgang Van Halen, Sophie Lloyd and Polyphia's Scott LePage

11 TIM HENSON/ SCOTT LEPAGE (Polyphia)

IT WOULD BE fair to say Ibanez have reestablished their vintage roots in recent years, partly thanks to players like Tim Henson and Scott LePage. The Polyphia pair encapsulate a new era of technical players looking for more classic-looking instruments with modern features — their own signature models drawing heavily from the thriving AZ series which debuted in 2018. "Those AZ

models are insanely versatile," LePage says. "You can go from shredding really hard to more beautiful chordal stuff... they're brilliant guitars." And speaking of Ibanez, the company's headline signature artist, Steve Vai, recently had this to say about Henson: "Tim is exploring new grounds. I'm seeing an evolution in a direction that I didn't... that I couldn't even see coming. And it's magnificent. I just love hearing those ideas and watching the execution of them. He thinks totally outside the box. And if you listen to early stuff, you can hear when he was thinking conventionally, but something happened and he just surrendered to some kind of creative vision. And that's what their music is. It's fantastic."

Top tracks: "G.O.A.T.," "40oz"

12 NICK LEE (Moon Tooth)

THE WORDS "PROGRESSIVE metal" and "Hendrix" aren't typically found in the same sentence — unless you're Nick Lee from Long Island group Moon Tooth, who decided to channel Jimi on their latest track, "Carry Me Home." "That song was inspired by a question to myself — 'What kind of riffs would Jimi Hendrix write if he had lived long enough to try tuning just his low E down to B?'" he tells us. "I was listening to [*Hendrix's*] *Band of Gypsys* a lot when I wrote it. I like the idea that someone who maybe happens upon Moon Tooth in the scope of a 'modern/progressive metal band' is also getting Hendrix, the Allman Brothers Band, Lynyrd Skynyrd, B.B. King and even some bluegrass — whether they realize it or not."

Top tracks: "Awe at All Angles," "Queen Wolf"

13 ICHIKA NITO

THOUGH LITTLE IS known about the man often cited as the best guitarist in Japan, Ichika Nito's Instagram and YouTube videos have become the stuff of legend — dazzling the guitar community with wildly inventive phrasing and rhythmic two-handed techniques. And if that isn't enough, his more recent videos using a 14-string custom guitar and harp will have you fixed on the edge of your seat. And, in case you missed it, be sure to dig through your back issues to find our transcription of Nito's "Orb." [*April 2021*]

Top tracks: "i miss you," "Isolation"

14 MATEUS ASATO

THE HIGHLY LAUDED neo-soul virtuoso and session guitarist (Tori Kelly, Jessie J) closed his Instagram account in early 2021, announcing he will be taking a break from music. Thankfully for us all, that didn't last long — Asato returning a year later with instrumental takes on classics by the Beatles and Leonard Cohen. It's been a massive year for the Brazilian guitarist, who has been touring R&B heavyweights Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak in their new band Silk Sonic, which included a performance at the Grammys back in April.

Top videos: "Dear God...," "Crying in a Loop"

15 MARCUS KING

ON HIS NEW track, "Rescue Me," 26 year-old Americana revivalist Marcus King dials in some truly mouth-watering vintage tones — putting down the ES-345s he's usually seen with for some tasteful D blues slide on an ebony Les Paul Custom in the video. "The guitar I'm most used to is my grandfather's 1962 ES-345," he once told us. "It has a Maestro tailpiece, which is really interesting — you won't find any other 345s with that kind of tail. Eventually I got tired of always taking it to the bathroom with me and having to keep it close, so it lives at home now."

Top tracks: "The Well," "Wildflowers & Wine"

16 YVETTE YOUNG (Covet)

FEW ELECTRIC PLAYERS have taken two-handed techniques to the stratospheric limits in recent years as inventively as Yvette Young, who fronts math rock trio Covet. And though she counts Eddie Van Halen as an influence, it's her musicality beyond the typical "Eruption" worship that's made her stand out, utilizing all kinds of open tunings on her YY10 and YY20 Ibanez signatures to dream up brilliantly detailed ethereal sounds. "I've used DADF♯AE a lot — that's one I really love," she tells *Guitar World*. "And if I switch the higher D to a C♯, it makes everything get a bit moody. Another one I like FACGAE, which is my favorite for acoustic."

Top tracks: "shibuya" (feat. San Holo), "falkor"

17 CORY WONG

IF YOU'RE ON the hunt for a modern-day equivalent to Nile Rodgers, there can be no other. The Vulfpeck collaborator, who unveiled his signature Strat through Fender last year, has just launched the second series of his brilliantly titled YouTube variety show *Cory and the Wongnotes*, which coincides with the release of new funk-fueled solo album *Power Station*. "I don't need to play full chords, I prefer to leave *out* notes to make space for everyone else," he says, of his favorite voicings. "Using tenths, for example, is a nice sound because it has the same harmonic information as just playing the thirds but it carries so much more because of the interval skip. It's almost like your brain fills out the blanks."

And what does Steve Vai say about Wong? "I love watching him play. It's rare for a guitarist to truly understand what it means to lock and what it means to groove. Of course, everybody has a level of understanding of groove. You may have a shredder that just has this powerful ability to play wildly fast. Or a jazz guy who can play chord changes at the speed of light. There's few cream-of-the-crop guitar players who play rhythm that own the groove. They own it — meaning they can play ahead of the groove, behind the groove. They can divide the groove in a relatively unconventional kind of a groove, and own it, and make you feel it while they're doing it. And I love that about Cory. He owns it."

Top tracks: "Golden," "Cosmic Sans"

WVH: SCOTT LEGATO/GETTY IMAGES SOPHIE: PROVIDED/PR LEPAGE: OLLY CURTIS/FUTURE

Lari Basilio with her signature Ibanez LB1

18 H.E.R.

MULTIPLE GRAMMY WINNER Gabriella Sarmiento Wilson, who works under the guise H.E.R., made history in 2020 as the first Black female artist in Fender history to be awarded a signature Fender. "I think it will inspire a lot of young Black girls — and actually a lot of young girls in general — to pick up the guitar, which is something we don't see enough of," she told us at the time. This year will mainly be centered around touring last year's *Back of My Mind* debut full-length, which featured an impressive cast of names from the hip-hop and R&B world.
Top tracks: "Could've Been" (feat. Bryson Tiller), "Focus"

19 LARI BASILIO

HAVING JUST WRAPPED sessions for her as-yet-untitled third album at Hollywood's United studio, backed by legends such as bass veteran Leland Sklar (Phil Collins, Hall & Oates) and master sticksman Vinnie Colaiuta (Jeff Beck, Frank Zappa), it's shaping up to be a big year for the Brazilian Ibanez signature artist. She's been using Laney amps for a good while now, and judging from the Lionheart, Ironheart and Cub-Supertop heads seen in her studio updates, there won't be any change there.
Top tracks: "Man in the Mirror," "Not Alone"

20 R.J. RONQUILLIO

MOST PEOPLE WILL be familiar with the name R.J. Ronquillio from the self-described Stringfluencer's no-nonsense gear demonstrations, as well as his insightful mini lessons across a variety of styles. But he's also toured and performed with the likes of Stevie Wonder, Ricky Martin and Stone Sour, with album credits on releases by Santana, 2PAC and DMX — which is perfectly understandable given his well-rounded and tasteful approach to all things six-string.
Top videos: "Life As a Professional Musician, Now," "Life of a Nashville Touring Musician"

21 MOLLY TUTTLE

MAKING HISTORY AS the first woman to ever win the International Bluegrass Music Association's Guitar Player of the Year award, the 29 year-old Californian has been making waves for her mastery of acoustic styles including clawhammer and crosspicking techniques. This year's third album, *Crooked Tree*, has been widely received as her finest yet, bringing the rich tapestries and rolling rhythms of folky Americana into the modern day.
Top tracks: "Take the Journey," "Sunflower, Vol. 6"

22 NILI BROSH

THE LAST FEW months have certainly been a busy time for the Ibanez-toting session queen, who — after appearing on Danny Elfman's recent *Big Mess* album — was also recruited for the film score wizard's live band, performing at Coachella alongside co-guitarist Wes Borland (Limp Bizkit). Since then, she's announced she'll be returning part-time to Cirque Du Soleil's Michael Jackson ONE Vegas residency as well as working on her fourth solo album.
Top tracks: "Primal Feels," "A Matter of Perception" GW

AND, TO GET US TO AN EVEN 50...

23. Samantha Fish
24. John Notto (Dirty Honey)
25. Mark Lettieri
26. Matteo Mancuso
27. Tash Sultana
28. Stu Mackenzie (King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard)
29. Ayla Tesler-Mabe
30. Mike Stringer (Spiritbox)
31. Lydia Night (The Regrettes)
32. Joey Landreth
33. Sungha Jung
34. Gina Gleason (Baroness)
35. Ayron Jones
36. Reba Meyers (Code Orange)
37. Melanie Faye
38. Marcin Patrzalek
39. Mdou Mastra
40. Yola
41. Adrian Quesada (Black Pumas)
42. Anthony Vincent
43. Brady Ebert/Pat McCrory (Turnstile)
44. Hannah Staphnill/Anna Papadimitriou (Hawxx)
45. Diamond Rowe/Josh Fore (Tetrarch)
46. Ruben Wan
47. Rob "Freaky Rob" Gueringer
48. Adam Hann
49. Daniele Mammarella
50. Helen Ibe

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GONE FISHIN'

A quick guide to CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM'S fiery blues lead style

BY PHIL SHORT

Like all the best blues players, Kingfish has a wonderful ear for melody and rhythmic phrasing

TENTER CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM. Kingfish — already a modern blues icon at 23 years old — displays a level of musical maturity far beyond his years, playing with tons of dynamics and delicious tone to boot. It's clear that Kingfish is well studied in all the great blues players of previous generations, with a vocabulary that is rich in fundamental blues language.

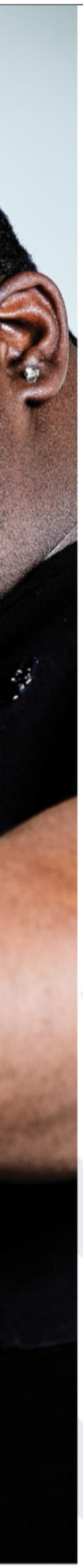
But like all the best blues players, Kingfish has a wonderful ear for melody and rhythmic phrasing. He successfully makes this blues vocabulary all his own, with a particular knack for combining major and minor pentatonic phrasing in a way that sounds lyrical, vocal and natural.

Kingfish, who hails from Clarksdale, Mississippi, has already headlined several tours off the back of his Grammy-nominated, self-titled 2019 debut album and its 2021 follow-up, *662* — an astonishing achievement for such a young artist. As well as being an accomplished player, Kingfish is an excellent vocalist and storyteller — all important parts of a successful and relatable artist. In his early years, his unusual appreciation for the tradition of early blues and his natural musical talent led him to securing a strong local fanbase, even capturing the attention of seasoned pros like [*B.B. King drummer*] Tony Coleman.

In our two studies (see **FIGURES 1** and **2**), we explore two key aspects of Kingfish's signature style — his mature grasp of combining minor and major pentatonic sounds with modal color tones and his fantastic control of dynamics, touch and expression. In **FIGURE 1**, we also get an example of his use of a chord shape for m7♭5, also known as a half-diminished 7, which was often employed by old-school bluesmen like T-Bone Walker to superimpose a dominant 9th tonality when played from the 3rd of the underlying major or dominant 7th chord. You can hear Kingfish use this device across a wide range of his tracks and live performances.

A NOTE ON KINGFISH'S TONE

Kingfish can be seen using a few different guitars, and he equally switches between Teles, Strats and LP-style axes. He also favors fairly heavy-gauge strings, using .11-.49s in standard tuning, to help give him a wider range of dynamics and a thick, warm tone. He prefers clean-tone, non-master-volume amps, using higher-gain overdrive pedals for his overdrive sounds. Push the mids and keep the gain relatively high for this lesson's solos.



JEN ROSENSTEIN

FIGURE 1

THIS STUDY, PLAYED over a funky groove in the key of E, emulates Kingfish's hotter, higher-gain blues tone. The tempo is steady, so be careful not to rush the opening riff; get it feeling solid and "in the pocket." It's counter-intuitive, but playing faster lines or riffs can often cause one to rush; it's a fault that's prevalent in many of us guitarists, and one we'd do well to try and overcome. Tapping your foot while soloing is a great way to keep steady time!

The riff that kicks off the jam is based on the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D), as are many of the lead phrases that follow. Notice the use of the C♯ "color tone," which is the major 6th, drawn from the parallel E major pentatonic scale (E, F♯, G♯, B, C♯). This note lends the phrases a warm and kind of bittersweet flavor, which sounds very soulful.

The m7♭5 chord occurs at the end of bar 2, where a G♯m7♭5 shape on the middle four strings is played over a low E bass note, creating an E9 sound. Notice how the shape then shifts down a half step (one fret) to D♯9 and back. This chromatic side-stepping creates a cool-sounding melodic-harmonic embellishment. When shifting, be sure to not squeeze the strings and harder than necessary to get a clear tone.

Wherever possible and practical, when performing the whole-step string bends that occur throughout solo, try to use two fingers to push the string instead of only one, lining up, say, the middle finger (2) one fret behind the ring finger (3), for added strength and control. The finger vibratos should be big, bold and even, consisting of a series of quick microbends and releases. As always, a polished, vocal-like vibrato should be the goal.

Notice the use of muted string rakes in bars 5 and 9, which add an aggressive attack to the bends. As indicated by the X's in the tablature, fret-hand muting is employed here, to achieve

FIG. 1

For audio of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/september2022

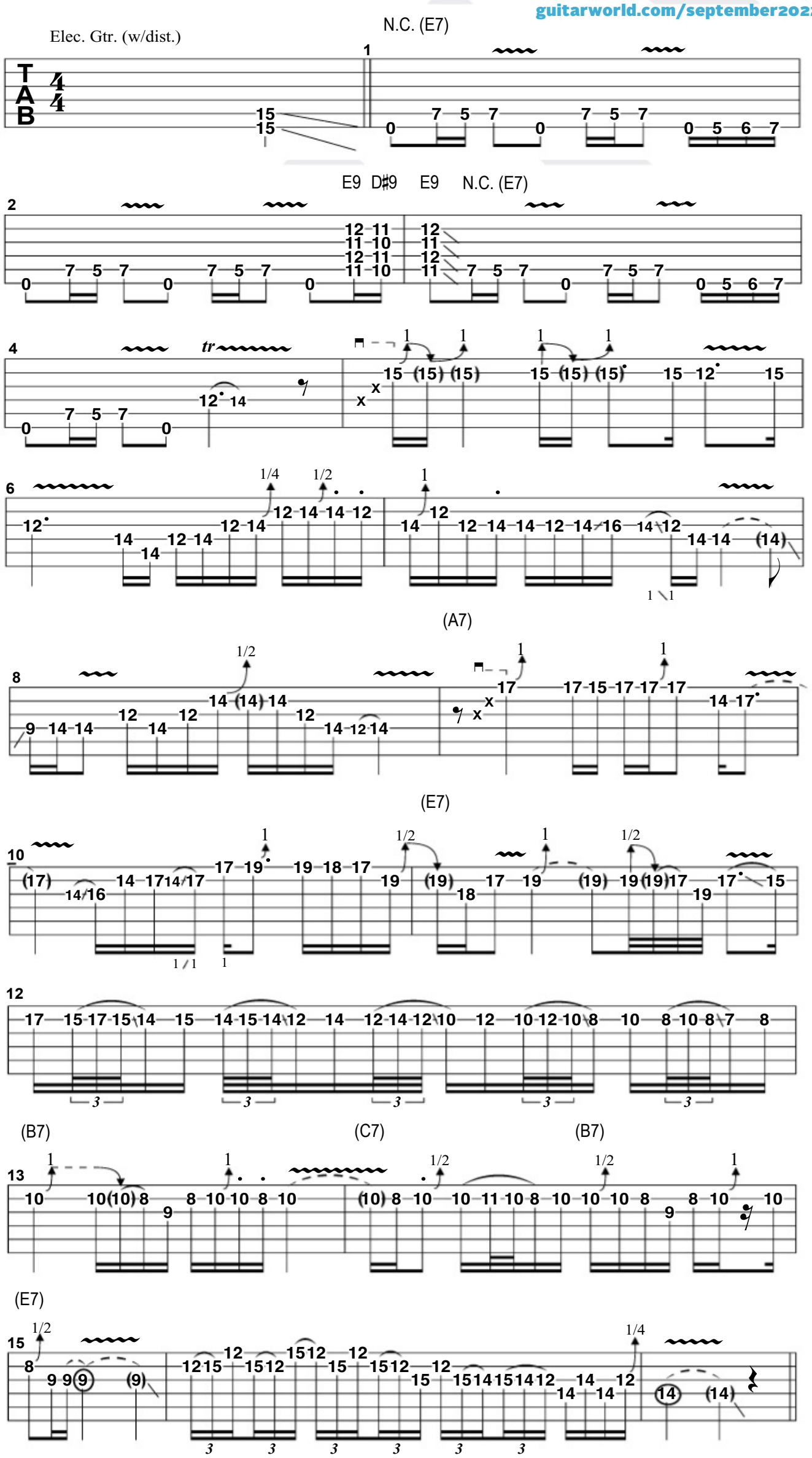
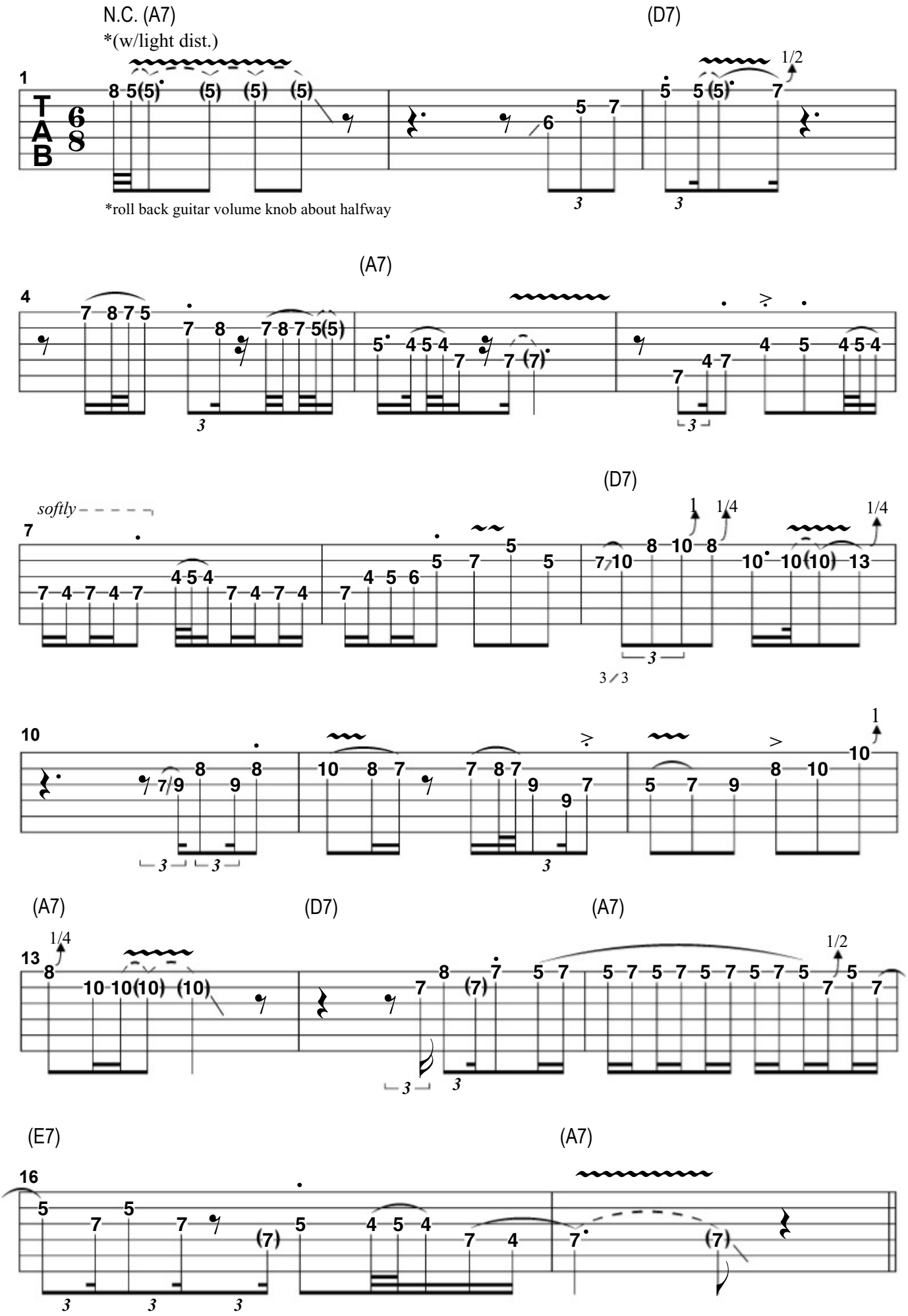


FIG. 2



a pitchless percussive sound when a string is picked or strummed. The rake is the same technique you would use to perform anarpeggio sweep, except here you're intentionally muting the strings with the fret-hand fingers, by touching them but not the fret.

Bar 12 features a sequence of hammer-pulls and descending finger slides down the B string, which creates an interesting cascading effect. This lick uses notes from the E Dorian mode (E, F♯, G, A, B, C♯, D).

FIGURE 2

PLAYED IN THE key of A and over a laid-back $\frac{6}{8}$ groove, this study is all about dynamics, touch and feel. Dial in a less gainy, "on the edge of break-up" tone here, which can be achieved with a moderately overdriven sound, by simply rolling back your guitar's volume control midway, to around "5." This is a great "tone is in the hands" approach, one that has been used to great effect by such blues-rock masters as Eric Clapton, Gary Moore and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

In terms of scale usage, here we're drawing mostly from A minor pentatonic (A, C, D, E, G) and A major pentatonic (A, B, C♯, E, F♯), as well as the A Dorian mode (A, B, C, D, E, F♯, G), with some phrases combining notes from all three scales to create mixed musical colors. When the implied chord changes to D, via the accompanying bass line, the notes of A Dorian take on different harmonic implications, reference D Mixolydian (D, E, F♯, G, A, B, C), which consists of the same seven notes.

Pay particular attention to the legato articulations here, striving to make the unpicked notes come across clearly and with a volume comparable to that of the picked notes. The hammer-ons should be quick and firm, and, when pull-ing off, pull the string slightly downward as you release it, almost plucking it with the fretting finger. This is known as getting good "fretboard traction." Also noteworthy are the *staccato* (short, punctuated) articulations, indicated by small black dots over certain tab numbers. Use fret-hand muting to "choke" the duration of the note immediately after it is picked.

Also, when playing the lines, apply a light palm mute to the unused lower strings, to suppress and minimize unwanted string noise, which can occur as the idle strings vibrate sympathetically as you play. This is especially important in a laid-back groove such as this, where you don't have a lot of cymbal ring to mask unwanted guitar sounds in the background. GW

For audio of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/september2022

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MENN AT WORK

Gretchen Menn has released two full-length solo albums – 2011's *Hale Souls* and 2016's *Abandon All Hope*. For more information (and more music), check out gretchenmenn.com.

LIMITLESS

Zepparella guitarist Gretchen Menn on balancing her classical chops with rock, the challenges of navigating the light and shade of Jimmy Page's playing – and winning the recent Martin Guitar/*GW* No Limits Challenge

Story by Adam Kovac | Photography by Jen Rosenstein

WHEN MARTIN GUITAR and *Guitar World* first came to Gretchen Menn, asking her to face off against seven of her contemporaries in the No Limits Challenge, a performance contest that blazed its way across GuitarWorld.com this spring, her first instinct was to pass. It wasn't just because the idea was presented to her as "March Madness with acoustic guitars," although Menn's lack of basketball acumen meant she had to have the bracket format explained to her. Rather, Menn had a hard time looking at music as a competition, especially when going up against people like Nili Brosh, who she counts as a close friend. It was only once she began thinking of the challenge less as a competition and more as a way for talented musicians to inspire each other that she threw her proverbial hat into the ring.

So her victory, which came after a series of head-to-head battles put to audience vote between April 1 and May 27, has come as such a shock that she's still processing it several days later.

"I hadn't prepared myself for even the possibility of getting past the first round," she says. "So I'm feeling the stress of participating and doing well in a competition when I'm such a non-competitive person. But I'm excited that it was interesting or enjoyable to people, and, honestly, the other people who were part of the challenge are people I know and love and respect musically. And so feeling that camaraderie all along the process was some-

"That's why I re-harmonized stuff [on "Man in a Box"], much to some people's delight – but just as much to other people's contempt"

thing that was really special."

Also special was the guitar at the center of the contest. The No Limits Challenge was meant to celebrate Martin's SC line of acoustics and their enhanced playability. Menn admitted to being somewhat skeptical of the Martin SC-10E [*reviewed in our May 2022 issue*] when it was first described to her. After all, this is an accomplished musician who has accumulated a sizable collection of instruments throughout a career that's in its second decade. What could another acoustic guitar offer her that she didn't already have access to?

"I didn't think there was something I needed that I didn't already have, and I was surprised that it felt so friendly for the hands and also didn't feel like a compromise, sonically," she says. "A lot of times if people have an acoustic guitar that's meant to be really finger friendly, sometimes the sound is a little bit less than you would desire. On the other hand, sometimes [*with*] really great-sounding instruments, it's like you've gotta go to steel-string bootcamp before you can play for longer than an hour without huge consequences to your hands and fingertips. I spent a lot of hours on the instrument and found it really comfortable to play — and also rewarding to hear."

While there's a long history of acoustic guitar builders making the lofty claim that their instruments play like an electric guitar, those claims often have quickly fallen apart. According to Menn, Martin has come as close as anybody with the SC-10E, with an instrument that, if it doesn't exactly play like a gigantic hollow Strat, "is an easy sidestep for a player," thanks to the guitar's deep cutaway and neck shape.

"I think it actually really kind of hit this Goldilocks zone of feeling like a legitimate acoustic and yet being like, 'Oh man, it's so cool.' I can hit these higher notes and play with a comfort that a lot of times some acoustic instruments take a little bit more getting used to."

How the Contest Was Won

THE EIGHT PLAYERS taking part in the No Limits Challenge were asked to showcase the SC-10E's features by tackling tunes not normally associated with acoustic guitars. Menn's victory was spurred by a couple of instrumental acoustic takes on classic Nineties alt-rock hits. Her version of Weezer's "Buddy Holly" has a gentler vibe that still maintains the playful bounce of the original. Likewise, her take on Alice In Chains' "Man in the Box" keeps the melancholy of Layne Staley's vocal arrangements but replaces Jerry Cantrell's chunk with delicate extended chords.

"I feel like for something like this, I can reimagine it and try to bring something creative to the table," Menn says. "And the tone of 'Man in the Box' is so creepy and eerie. It's also very powerful. I thought, this is an acoustic guitar; if I try to capture the power, I'm never going to get it. It's not going to showcase the instrument well, so I need to lean into something else about the piece. So I leaned into the creepiness, I leaned into the eeriness. That's why I re-harmonized stuff, much to some people's delight — but just as much to other people's contempt."

It was her original composition, 'Venice,' however, that sealed Menn's victory. The track, which will appear on an upcoming solo album, showcases gauzy fingerpicking intertwined with tapped artificial harmonics and was inspired by the titular Italian city and its role in her life. Menn had long wanted to visit the canals of the historic town. When she met her now-husband, who comes from a nearby part of Italy, she was able to go with him, a journey that saw her falling in love in the midst of a notoriously romantic locale.

The track showcases a side of Menn's playing that's rarely seen in her most well-known gig: as the Jimmy Page stand-in for Bay Area all-female Led Zeppelin tribute act Zepparella. While Menn's love affair with the guitar started with her taking on classical pieces, her stint with Zepparella forced her to closely study Page's playing, which, as most music fans know, sometimes veered into the eccentric.

"Playing with Zepparella is great because Jimmy does use a lot of different techniques. I mean, that was the first time I picked up a slide. It was certainly the first time I ever beat up a Les Paul with a violin bow! And he does everything from beautiful acoustic open tuning to heavier riffs. We do stand on the shoulders of giants, and I would challenge anybody to really dive into the music of Led Zeppelin as a guitar player, or, gosh, any instrument, really, and not find a lot of fun there."

Any audiences that only know Menn for her role playing the riffs of one of the world's most beloved sidemen are missing out. Her solo work has seen her push her playing into new and surprising places.

Stairway to Hell

NOWHERE IS THAT better displayed than on her most recent release, 2016's *Abandon All Hope*. Inspired by Dante's *Inferno,* which includes vivid descriptions of the karmic fate that awaits all variety of evil-doers, the record has portions that rage with riff-fueled fury but more often shows off Menn's ability at arranging. Her classical-style picking mingles with fluid piano and violin lines in a style she hopes to continue showing off. After all, *Inferno* is only the first portion of Dante's epic poem *The Divine Comedy,* and Menn is actively working on a follow-up based on the writer's description of purgatory and hopes to one day complete the trilogy with his take on heaven.

"I think with the Dante album, it was me kind of realizing I didn't have to keep the two worlds separate, that I didn't have to be this apologetic, non-full-fledged classical player but I didn't have to reject the rest of my taste, because I also like rock guitar. So I really just tried to do whatever I wanted and be like, 'Okay! A little bit of both!"

If the instrumental arrangement on *Abandon All Hope* is impressive, what was truly a monumental task was capturing the feel of Dante's crowing work. The *Inferno* is dense with historical and literary references, requiring familiarity with ancient Roman poets and the vagaries of 13th-century Italian politics. Instrumental albums traditionally don't come with footnotes, so Menn was faced with the challenge of conveying the ideas and emotions of the poem through sound alone. Menn prepared by not just brushing up on her history but immersing herself in concept-based art, including Stravinsky's *The Rites of Spring* and the works

Gretchen Menn photographed in June with her Martin SC-10E. "It hits this Goldilocks zone of feeling like a legitimate acoustic and yet being like, 'Oh man, it's so cool,'" she says

VICTORY IN VENICE

To watch all the Martin/*GW* No Limits Challenge videos — including Gretchen Menn's winning video, "Venice" — head to guitarworld.com/tag/no-limits-challenge. Menn's winning performance is also available at guitarworld.com/september2022.

of Pink Floyd.

"Before I even wrote a single note, I had a sheet of paper where I sketched out which areas were going to be invoked musically," she says. "Then I tried to plan everything from key centers to... here's the ensemble, here's the tempo. An album faced on a journey through the underworld, how much fire and brimstone can you really have and still have it feel like a complete album and journey? It has to have that contrast. So I looked carefully for areas where I could evoke something other than suffering and hell."

Bring It on Home

ASIDE FROM THE glory of victory and getting her hands on a unique new instrument, Menn will soon be getting a tour of Martin's storied factory in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. It may not have the romance of a trip to northern Italy, but even this far into a varied and eclectic musical career, Menn is still excited by the chance to get educated.

"There's so much to learn in terms of music and your instrument and how instruments are built. I'm just going in wide open to whatever I can learn." GW

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NO LIMITS CHALLENGE

The following guitarists participated in the Martin/*GW* No Limits Challenge:

- GRETCHEN MENN
- HELEN IBE
- SOPHIE BURRELL
- JAY LEONARD J
- NILI BROSH
- RJ RONQUILLO
- COLIN SCOTT
- RUBEN WAN

"We do stand on the shoulders of giants," Menn says. "And I would challenge anybody to really dive into the music of Led Zeppelin as a guitar player... and not find a lot of fun there"

"Playing with Zepparella is great because Jimmy Page does use a lot of techniques. That was the first time I picked up a slide, the first time I beat up a Les Paul with a violin bow!"

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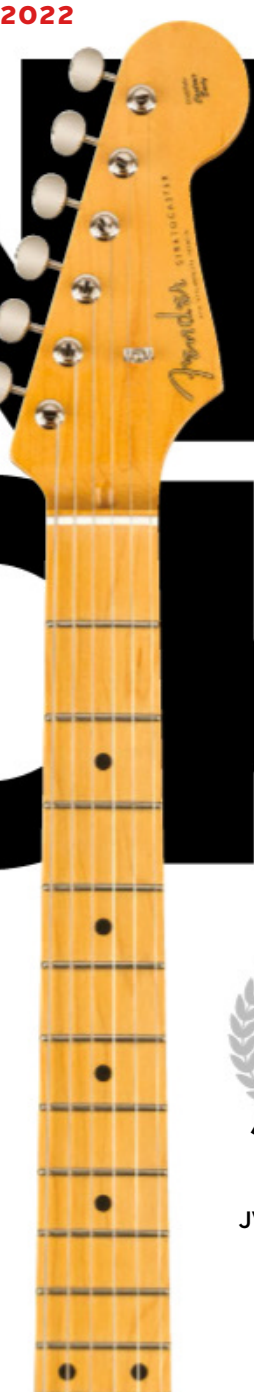

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Fender
JV Modified '50s
Stratocaster
HSS

the gear in review

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GAMMA
G25 and G50 guitar combo amplifiers

76
LAVA MUSIC
Blue Lava Touch

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EARTHQUAKER DEVICES
Special Cranker

Japanese Style Originator

FENDER JV MODIFIED '50S STRATOCASTER HSS AND JV MODIFIED '60S CUSTOM TELECASTER

By Chris Gill

DURING THE LATE Seventies, several Japanese guitar factories were making copies of classic American electric guitars that were both better and cheaper than what the biggest companies in the USA were currently offering. This resulted in what is now known as the lawsuit period. Instead of suing the competition, Fender opted not to go to battle with these skillful Japanese builders, recognizing that it could be more advantageous to join forces with them. This led to Fender's highly acclaimed Japanese-made Vintage reissue models ('57 and '62 Stratocaster, '52 Telecaster) introduced in 1982, followed later by the '62 Custom Telecaster introduced in 1985.

Fender's Japanese-made guitars played important roles in reviving the company's reputation during the latter CBS era and by providing manufacturing facilities during the transition from CBS to FMIC (before FMIC's Corona factory was built). In more recent times, Fender Japan has made products primarily for the domestic Japanese market, with a few special models occasionally released in the US. The new JV Modified series (with JV meaning "Japanese Vintage") marks a return of Japanese-made Fender guitars to the export market. Currently, four different JV Modified models are available: the '50s Stratocaster HSS, '60s Stratocaster, '50s Telecaster and '60s Custom Telecaster. We took a look at the '50s Stratocaster HSS and '60s Custom Telecaster.

Fender JV Modified '60s Custom Telecaster

FEATURES "Modified" is the key word of what the new JV Modified series is all about. While all four models have vintage "bones," their primary appeal lies in the modifications that provide an ideal balance of timeless classic features and upgrades that are essential for modern players. Instead of traditional ash or alder, the bodies are made of light, resonant basswood, with the '50s Stratocaster HSS having a two-color sunburst finish while the '60s Custom Telecaster has a dazzling Firemist Gold finish and bound top and back. The necks on both models are maple, with the Strat HSS having a maple fingerboard while the Custom Tele has a slab rosewood fingerboard. Both necks share a thick soft V-shaped neck profile, 9.5-inch radius, 21 medium jumbo frets, 25.5-inch scale length and bone nut.

The '50s Stratocaster HSS is equipped with a Hot Vintage Alnico humbucker at the bridge and Vintage-Style single-coil Strat pickups at the neck and middle. A five-position blade selector switch provides the usual separate and "in between" pickup settings, and controls consist of master volume, neck/middle tone and bridge tone, with the latter providing a push/pull pot for engaging coil splitting on the humbucker. Hardware includes a six-saddle vintage-style synchronized tremolo bridge with bent steel saddles, vintage-style locking tuners, aged white plastic control knobs and a single-ply parchment pickguard.

The '60s Custom Telecaster provides a pair of Vintage-Style single-coil Tele pickups and a four-position pickup selector switch that engages bridge, neck/bridge parallel, neck and neck/bridge series settings. Controls consist of master volume and master tone, with the latter providing a push/pull setting that activates an out-of-phase mode. The hardware is vintage correct, including a vintage-style Tele bridge with three barrel brass saddles, vintage-style locking tuners, knurled metal flat-top knobs and a three-ply parchment pickguard.

PERFORMANCE Although Fender describes the neck profile as "thick" it's not overly hefty or "baseball bat"-like, but rather quite comfortably contoured and shaped to provide a good balance of solid stiffness and fast playability. As a result it's one of the most comfortable Fenders I've played in recent years. The basswood bodies provide punchy, aggressive attack and smooth, resonant sustain. The workmanship and attention to detail is flawless, which has become the norm for all Fender guitars, whether they're made in the US, Mexico, Japan or elsewhere.

Both models provide an expanded variety of highly useful tones. The Strat HSS's humbucker delivers fat midrange bark, and its volume output is balanced with that of the neck and bridge single-coils. I particularly liked the bridge/middle setting with the bridge humbucker's tone control at 1, which reminded me of Clapton's classic mid-Seventies lead tones. The Custom Tele's voices are all very useful, including the out-of-phase settings, a couple of which had the funky nasal bite of some of Jimmy Page's Led Zep tones. The coolest feature is how both models provide all of their beloved original vintage tones along with an expanded palette of modified voices instantly available at the guitarist's fingertips.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICES:
$1,329.99 (JV Modified '50s Stratocaster HSS); $1,349.99 (JV Modified '60s Custom Telecaster)

MANUFACTURER:
Fender, fender.com

- The JV Modified '50s Stratocaster HSS is offered only with a two-color sunburst finish, while the JV Modified '60s Custom Telecaster comes only with a Firemist Gold finish.
- Both models feature a basswood body and maple neck with a thick soft "V" profile, 21 medium jumbo frets and bone nut.
- The JV Modified '50s Stratocaster HSS has a Hot Vintage Alnico humbucking bridge pickup with a push/pull coil-split function on the bridge tone knob.
- The JV Modified '60s Custom Telecaster provides a four-way pickup selector switch with a series mode and push/pull tone pot that activates an out-of-phase setting.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:** The welcome return of Fender's Japanese-made Strats and Teles to the export market is made even more special with instruments that provide a compelling balance between vintage quality and tones combined with modern playability and an expanded selection of cool tones.

Ray of Light

GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

GAMMA G25 AND G50 GUITAR COMBO AMPLIFIERS

By Chris Gill

Gamma's new G50 combo (not shown: the G25)

OVER THE LAST 25 to 30 years, it has been nearly impossible to buy a decent brand-new guitar amplifier for less than $200. The cost of an amplifier in this price range wasn't the only thing that was low — so were the volume output, sound quality and players' expectations for getting an amp that could be used for anything other than disappointing solo practice sessions.

The Gamma G25 and G50 guitar combo amplifiers from Acoustic Control (Guitar Center's amp-manufacturing division) offer a surprising exception to this phenomenon, particularly during these times of rampant inflation, when it costs almost $200 to fill your gas tank. The Gamma G25 and G50 are genuine guitar amps in the truest sense, meaning they are loud enough to gig with and sound good enough to record. While these combos may lack the bells and whistles (like built-in digital effects or dozens of amp models) of their slightly more expensive competition, the emphasis on good, solid guitar tones is refreshing for a combo that costs about as much as a stomp box.

FEATURES The Gamma G25 is a 25-watt combo with a single 10-inch speaker, while the G50 is a 50-watt 1x12 combo. Beyond those specs, the features of each are basically identical. A two-channel design provides a straightforward Blue channel with only a volume control and a versatile Red channel with Drive and Volume controls, and a voicing switch (Clean, Blues, Rock, Metal). The Bass, Mid and Treble controls are shared for both channels. There are also an 1/8-inch Aux input and headphone jacks and a Bluetooth switch for linking a Bluetooth audio device. The rear panel is spartan, providing only a ¼-inch jack for an optional footswitch, for toggling between the Blue and Red channels.

PERFORMANCE When it comes to sound quality, the Gamma G25 and G50 punch well above other contenders in a similar price range. Emphasis was clearly placed on the essentials, such as the True Blue speakers, which deliver outstanding headroom and are tuned to accentuate desirable guitar tones across an optimal frequency range. The tone controls are versatile and provide attractive tones across their entire range — no weird or artificial-sounding frequency peaks here.

The Blue channel remains clean yet aggressively punchy across its entire volume output range, making it an ideal base for a pedal or multi-effects rig. The Red channel delivers what its Voicing switch promises: the Clean setting matches the Blue channel's full-bodied character but can be pushed to crunchy overdrive via the Drive control; the Blues setting offers more aggressive overdrive with slightly scooped mids; the Rock setting is decidedly more crunchy and saturated with a more prominent midrange lead voice; and the Metal setting is full-out high-gain distortion with excellent note definition, tight bass and mids that can be scooped or boosted in your face. Throughout, the bass never sounds flabby and the treble is never piercing or harsh. The mids may not sound quite as refined or silky smooth as those of a $2,000 boutique amp — with some guitars the mids can have a slightly nasal, wah-like quality — but hey, you get what you pay for (and, in the case of the Gamma combos, surprisingly much more). Overall, the combos pair well with a wide variety of guitars and pickups, from Stat- and Tele-style single coils to P-90 and hot-rodded humbuckers.

The Aux In and Bluetooth features allow users to play external audio sources through the amp, but because the Gamma combos are guitar amps first and foremost and not designed for full-range hi-fi applications, this is more of a convenience for practice. Sound quality via headphones is impressive, and the combo's internal speaker is automatically bypassed when headphones are plugged in. The G50 is impressively loud enough to gig with in a full-band situation, and even the lower-powered G25 can handle smaller club gigs — as long as the drummer doesn't think he's Alex Van Halen.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $139.99 (G25); $199.99 (G50)
MANUFACTURER: Acoustic Control Corporation, acousticamplification.com

- The Blue channel provides loud, full-bodied clean tone that makes an ideal base for a pedal or multi-effects rig.
- The Red channel provides a selection of Clean, Blues, Rock and Metal voices with varying levels of gain and slightly different overall tonal character.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** For about the cost of a stomp box, the Gamma G25 and G50 combos are gig- and studio-worthy amps that place emphasis on outstanding, useful and musical pro-quality tones over gimmicky bells and whistles.

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Touch and Go!

LAVA MUSIC BLUE LAVA

By Paul Riario

FOLLOW THE ERUPTING proliferation of smart-tech musical instruments and you'll most likely find Lava Music at the forefront of this molten integration. Last year's release of the innovative Lava Me 3 — the company's first smart guitar — with its eye-catching finishes, futuristic design and integrated touchscreen display with proprietary HILAVA operating system, proved that smart devices could seamlessly co-exist within a carbon-fiber instrument in a beneficial way. The only hiccup was that its price made it a challenging peak for those curious enough to explore its app-driven tools (which are primed for practicing and creating instant musical content) and on-the-go, player-friendly size. But now it seems Lava is determined to have its revolutionary instrument in the hands of seasoned players and tech-savvy consumers alike with the release of their eco-friendly Blue Lava guitar that includes the same HILAVA interface as its predecessor at a far more prudent price.

FEATURES Blue Lava eschews wood for a recyclable HPL (high-pressure laminate) in its "green" construction and employs Lava's 4-Mass internal design structure to enhance vibrations throughout the body and neck, ensuring a much better bass response and a robust acoustic tone in a lightweight, composite material guitar that's built to endure extreme temperature changes. The app-based touchscreen display above the soundhole port allows you to access the HILAVA system's many built-in actuator-enhanced effects (no external amp required), play along and record with a multitude of musical grooves and measure your performance and progress with interactive practice apps. The system also features an onboard tuner, metronome, multi-track looper and recorder and so much more — making it a game-changing, all-in-one guitar. Blue Lava comes in a compact 36–inch size with a lower-bout USB-C port (for charging and updatable connectivity) and is available in Sail White, Midnight Black, Coral/Lavender, Aqua/Mint Green and Ice/Ocean Blue anti-scratch matte finishes.

PERFORMANCE First, you'll need to pair the guitar via Bluetooth with the free companion Lava+ mobile app and establish an account to unlock all its potential; but once you do, you're able to share your music, review stats and check out musical posts of artists you can connect with from the extended Lava community. Its 3.5–inch display is activated via the power button in the sound port adjacent to the internal volume wheel. Navigating is as simple as a smartphone in swiping screens to find apps for Tuner, Tempo (metronome), Recorder, Effects, Practice, Loops (grooves), as well as folders you can store music and pictures, find updates and access general settings. The Tuner has an easy-to-read display and is

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: from $649
MANUFACTURER: Lava Music, lavamusic.com/blue-lava

- The HILAVA system is loaded with built-in guitar apps such as Effects, Loops, Practice, Tempo, Tuner, and Recorder that make creating guitar music a snap.
- The Practice app uses sound detection technology to detect accuracy and generates a detailed report of your performance to analyze.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** The Blue Lava is a cutting-edge smart guitar with built-in intuitive guitar-centric apps, with which you can record and engage your creativity in a myriad of ways without having to plug into any external gear.

super-accurate, and you can hear and feel a click when you're in tune. The Practice app uses sound-detection technology in each of its five practice modes — chord transition, strumming, scale training, ear training and single-note training — so it can provide a detailed report in post, documenting your progress and playing accuracy. Scale training is fun for its scores of standard or byzantine scales to practice from in different positions on the neck, and it tracks how many right and wrong notes you strike. There are numerous effects with colorful names that very much reflect their filtered voice, creating sounds anywhere from spatially effervescent to deeply oscillating, and you can group any of them as a trio in Templates to access quickly and deep dive into modifying and editing their parameters.

Also, Blue Lava is still an acoustic/electric guitar that you can rock out with live, so it has a ¼–inch input jack and specific line-out effects algorithms for that capability. The showstopper is the looping function where you can dig on countless grooves from all genres and styles and alter time signatures, BPMs and bars within the loops. Once you find a groove, you can preview or use it and have up to four tracks to record on top of the original loop. Once you're done, you can save as a draft and/or share it on the Lava social platform. Finally, Blue Lava plays comfortably as a shorter-scale guitar with relatively low action, but more importantly, I find it an invaluable companion that doubles as your sketch pad, practice partner or idea machine where you don't need to pull out your phone — it's all baked-in — and yet, portable enough to take anywhere when inspiration calls. Best of all, it's an evolutionary musical instrument that will continually be updated with even more features, tools and sounds.

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Buzz Bin
EarthQuaker Devices Special Cranker

MY INTRODUCTION TO EarthQuaker Devices was the Speaker Cranker I reviewed (glowingly) well over a decade ago. I loved the pedal not only for "not coloring your tone dramatically" but for doing exactly as its name implied — pushing a speaker toward the edge of breakup with its one and only knob. Even back then, I knew this small boutique company from Akron, Ohio, which hand-built graphic-emblazoned pedals, was going to be a big deal. Well, here we are in 2022, and EQD is a serious heavyweight in the stompbox biz, and I'm feeling pretty good about my clairvoyance. Of course, this wasn't hard to predict because EQD continually creates some of the most sonically immersive effects. And with that impressive track record, I'm excited to now review the Special Cranker, which builds upon the discontinued Speaker Cranker, with a few more knobs and two clipping diode options for some glorious gain.

To dismiss the Special Cranker as just another overdrive would be totally overlooking what it aims to achieve. Whereas EQD's noteworthy and excellent Plumes pedal provides varying shades of Screamer-style overdrive, the Special Cranker excels in retaining the organic subtleties of your amp's character while offering some "special" options of adding more preamp gain color to your signal without getting in the way of it. Think of it as a pedal even Nigel Tufnel would endorse by pointing at the Special Cranker's knobs and concluding "these go to 11" despite no numerical evidence of it. Speaking of knobs, the Special Cranker has controls for Level, Tone and More (gain adjustment) and Diode Selector switch (Germanium or Silicon). What's interesting is that "More" governs the bias of the transistor, so there'll be some crackling involved as you increase it, which can result in summoning some over-biased saturation depending on the output of your pickups. I dig that the EQD footswitch employs Flexi-Switch Technology, which allows you to simultaneously use momentary and latching style switching, and that the pedal can safely be operated between 9 and 18 volts.

Whether you use the Special Cranker as a clean boost or to drive the front end of your amp, it's apparent how much it enhances your signal. EQD seems to have really dialed in the relationship of touch sensitivity and sweetened gain response to the point that the Special Cranker sounds like an extension of your amp. As you inch up the More knob, you're greeted with strapping tube-like crunch that sounds increasingly complex. I also loved that the Tone control never interfered with my amp's EQ — rather, it complements it, bringing out the frequencies I was looking for. Having the choice of Germanium or Silicon diodes had me second-guessing which I enjoyed more. Sure, the Germanium side drops the volume a degree for a softer, slightly compressed saturation while Silicon brings out all the rich dynamics and brightness for a more pronounced and meaty amp-like breakup. It's an overdrive for feel players that don't normally use them, and one you'll want to leave on all the time. — *Paul Riario*

STREET PRICE: $99
MANUFACTURER: EarthQuaker Devices, earthquakerdevices.com

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IN DEEP
by Andy Aledort

For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/september2022

SOMETHING IN THE AIR, PART 2

How to play the "Save Something for Me" solo

LAST MONTH, WE went over the verse rhythm part to "Save Something for Me," the second track off my new album, *Light of Love*. This month, we'll look at the solo.

"Save Something for Me" is played in the key of G and is built from a repeating G - Em axis, as the two chords alternate in bars 1-8. Bars 9-14 feature the progression C - Am - Em - G, then Am - C - Em - D. All of these chords live in the key of G major (and Em). As I stated last time, many songs are built around the relative major/minor relationship between G and Em, familiar examples being Neil Young's "Heart of Gold" and "Rockin' in the Free World," the Grateful Dead's "Me and My Uncle" and Tom Petty's "I Won't Back Down."

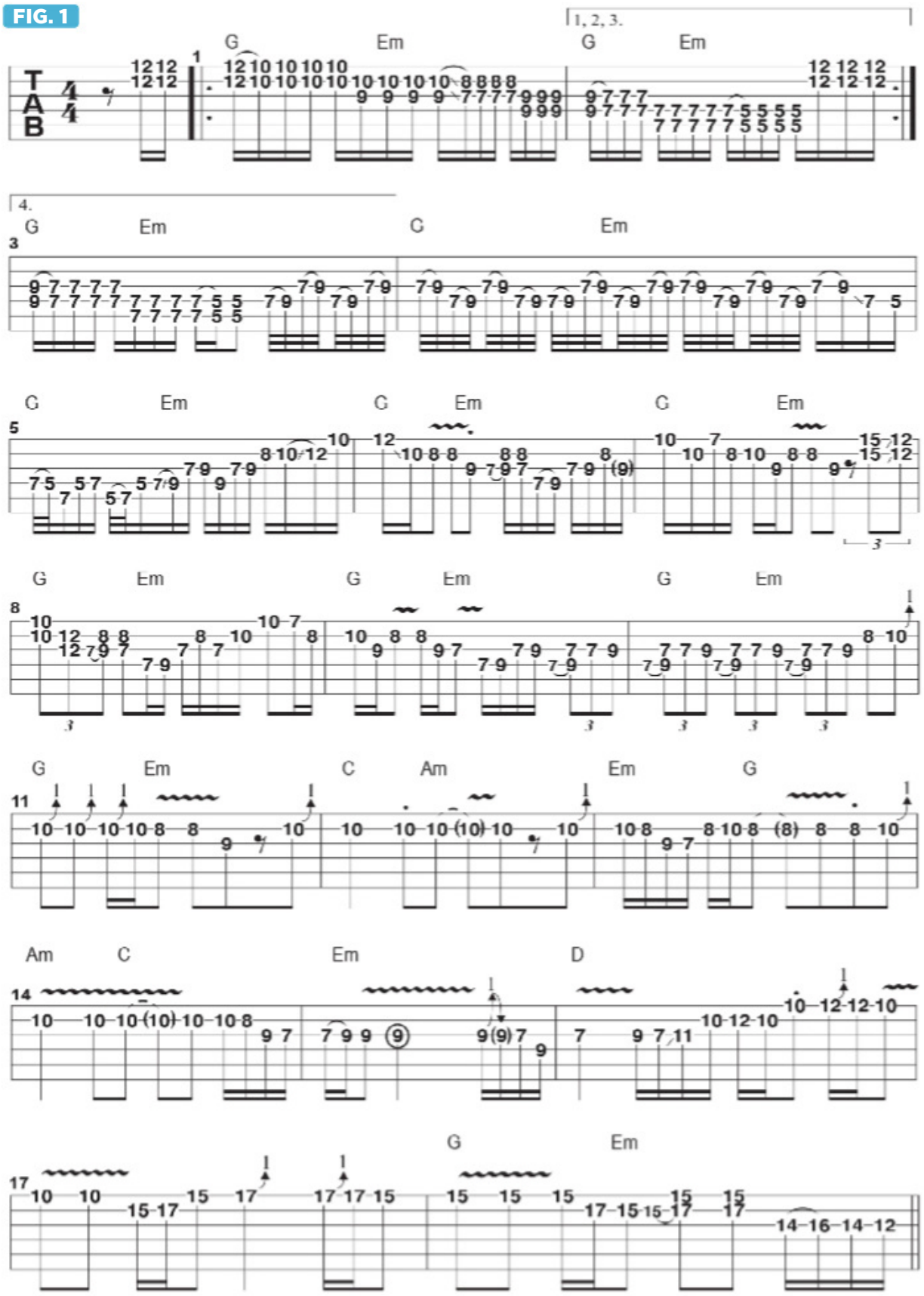
When soloing over this progression, I chose to stick with the G major pentatonic scale (G, A, B, D, E), which consists of the same five notes as E minor pentatonic (E, G, A, B, D), making the scale ideal for playing over this progression. The only exception to this is at the very end of the verse form, where the progression goes to the V (five) chord, D. Here, I play D major pentatonic (D, E, F♯, A, B) which resolves well back to the tonic, or I (one) chord, G.

FIGURE 1 depicts the first 18 bars of the solo. I begin with a theme that's played four times. Playing on pairs of adjacent strings, I start on the top two and then move down to the B and G, the G and D and the D and A strings, using barres on all string pairs, except the B and G, to sound 4th intervals.

At the 4th ending (bar 3), I play fast hammer-ons on the D and G strings in steady 32nd notes. Notice that the hammers on the G string are repeated as we move from bar 4 into bar 5, and in bar 5 the repeated hammers move down to the D string and then back to the G, sounding a melodic theme in the solo line. This phrase is definitely tricky to nail, so I recommend playing through it slowly at first, taking notice of how the "doubled hammers" relate to each other.

In bars 7 and 8, barres on pairs of adjacent strings that sound 4ths are revisited, this time played as eighth-note triplets. The eighth-note triplet rhythm is repeated in bars 9 and 10. Jimi Hendrix used phrases like these to great effect on several of his songs, such as "The Wind Cries Mary" and "One Rainy Wish."

FIG. 1



At bar 12, the progression shifts to C - Am - Em - G, then Am - C - Em, and the lines I play here offer a new theme while relating closely to each chord. Bars 16-17 shift to D and lines based on the D major pentatonic scale before the progression resolves back to G - Em.

My intention with this solo was to present interesting melodies that weave through the progression. Once you have a handle on it, try crafting similar lines of your own.

***GW* associate editor Andy Aledort is recognized worldwide for his vast contributions to guitar instruction, via his many best-selling instructional DVDs, transcription books and online lessons. His new album, *Light of Love*, is available from andyaledort.com and all streaming services.**

ALISON HASBACH

COLUMNS

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/september2022

POWER OF THREE

The art of playing in a trio

WHEN I FIRST started playing in a band, it was with a "power trio," which consists of guitar, bass and drums. So many of our favorite rock bands are essentially power trios that actually have four people, because there is also a singer: Led Zeppelin, Free, the Who and many others. If you are the lead singer and the guitar player, or the lead singer and bass player, you can perform as a three-piece, classic examples being Trapeze with Glenn Hughes, and of course Jimi Hendrix and Cream.

There are a few techniques on the guitar that apply best to the three-piece power trio format, in the sense that you, the guitarist, have way more sonic space to take up. Once you start adding other instruments, such as keyboards, horns or a second guitar, you can't put all of those things in there that you can when it's just the trio. In other words, it's not always optimal to take the things you would do as a guitarist in a power trio and play them in a larger ensemble.

One thing I really like to lean on when playing in a trio is chordal/rhythm things composed of two and three notes. I find that this approach works really well, to help fill out the sound. **FIGURE 1** illustrates an improvised rhythm "riff" in the key of E: in bars 1 and 2, I sound two-note figures on adjacent strings via index-finger barres and I'll use hammer-ons and pull-offs to create melodic figures. In bar 3, I incorporate three-note chordal shapes into the mix. In bar 5, I switch to sliding 6ths, which is another approach that sounds great and works very well in filling out the sound when playing in the trio format.

At the end of bar 5 through bars 6 and 7, I play an ascending melody in alternating fashion against an open low-E pedal tone. The trio format accommodates the use of these low E pedal tones well, as they will be heard clearly while also serving to make the overall "presence" of the guitar a lot bigger.

Bar 8 features a return to sliding 6ths, followed in bars 9-12 with more adjacent-string index-finger barres and hammer-ons. In bar 10, I add octaves over the B chord. The figure ends with more single-note lines played against low-string pedal tones.

As you can see, when playing rhythm guitar in a trio, you are free to play a lot more open strings and pedal-tone based phrases. All of these techniques — two-note melodic figures, low pedal tones, sliding 6ths, octaves shapes — work exceptionally well when playing in a trio and serve to widen the sound of the whole band.

When I'm playing in a larger ensemble, such as an eight-piece band, I couldn't get away with bringing in all of that resonance from the open strings. Everything I play would be more truncated, so that it will fit into the overall presentation in a clear way. **FIGURE 2** offers a good example of how I would use all of these same techniques, but here I leave space, with rests on certain beats, in order to allow room for the band to "breathe" well.

FIG. 1

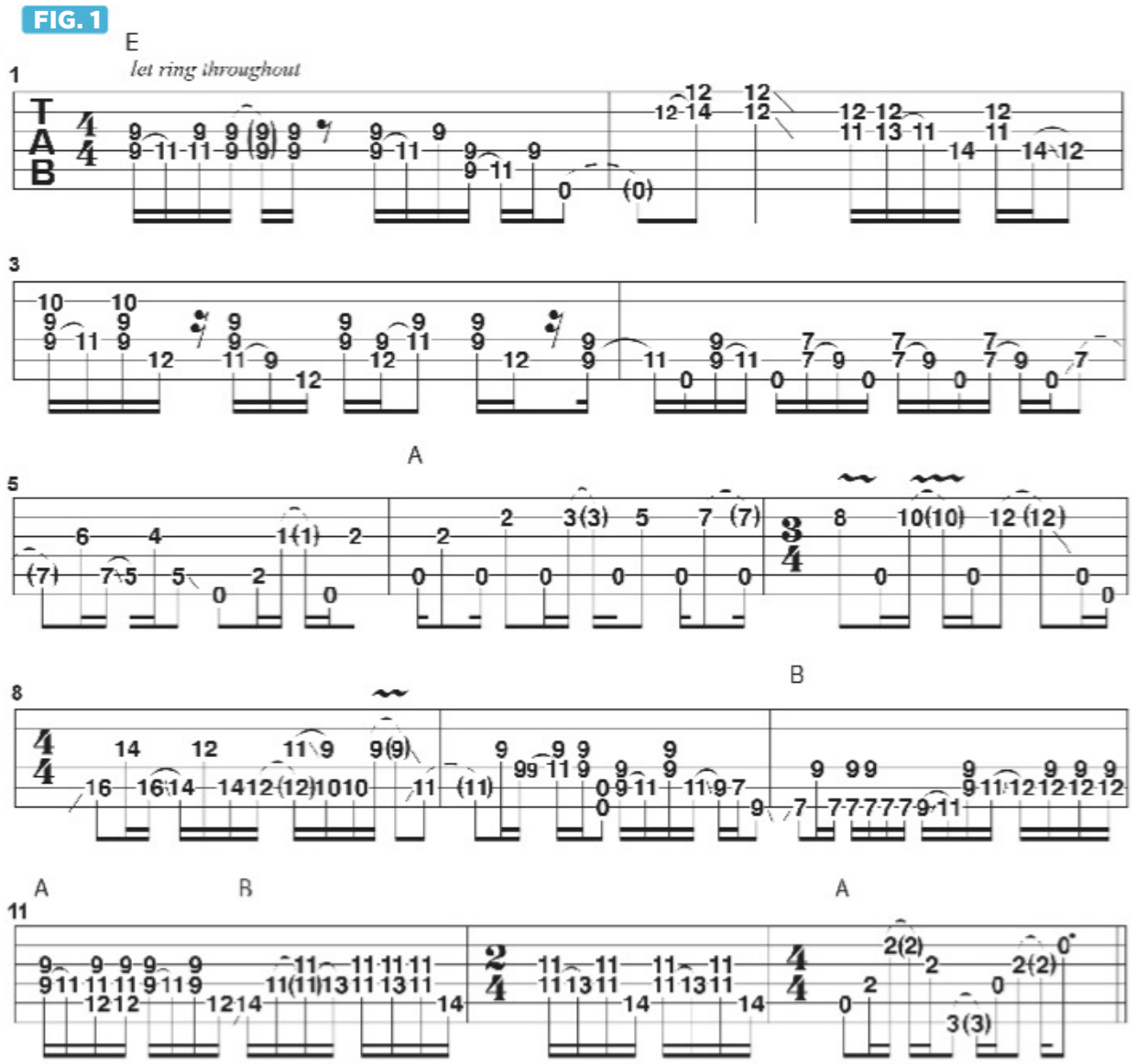
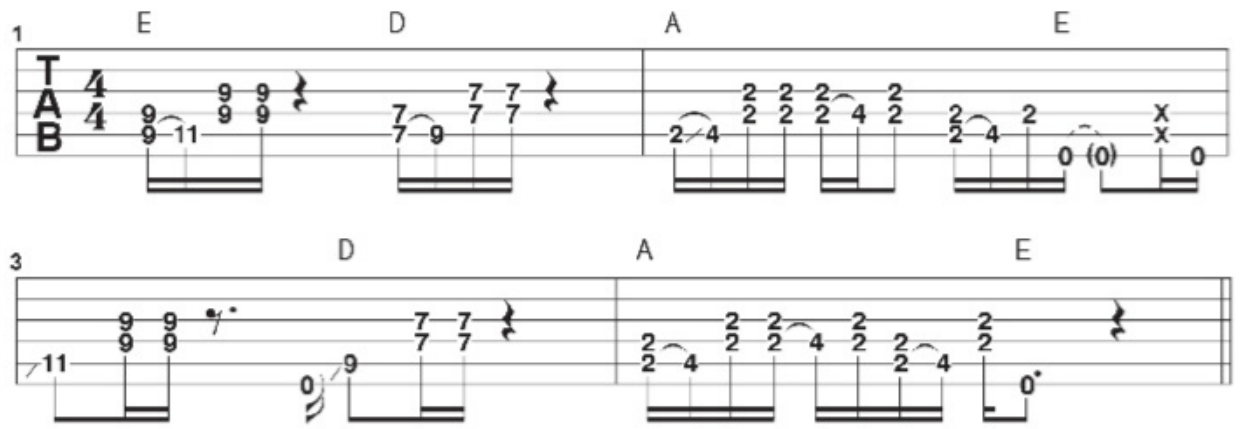


FIG. 2



Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular and successful blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and *de facto* ambassador of the blues (and of the guitar in general).

ELEANOR JANE

MELODIC MUSE

by Andy Timmons

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/september2022

STRAWBERRY FIELD

How to play "Shuggie," part 1

ON MY LATEST album, *Electric Truth*, there's a song called "Shuggie," which is an homage to the legendary R&B/blues artist Shuggie Otis. Shuggie, son of R&B impresario Johnny Otis, started out playing guitar in his father's band at the young age of 11. He began recording for Epic Records in his late teens and in 1971 released the album *Freedom Flight* that included the song "Strawberry Letter #23," which went to become a smash hit for the Brothers Johnson in 1977.

The Brothers Johnson version of "Strawberry Letter #23" is a song I've always loved since I first heard it, and it always reminds me of growing up in the Seventies, when commercial radio wasn't segregated in any way. You could hear songs by Dolly Parton, Queen, ZZ Top and Earth, Wind & Fire all on the same station, and we listeners were just soaking it all up. "Strawberry Letter #23" features a fast, harmonized guitar part that has always leapt out at me and is one of my favorite moments in guitar history.

Years later, in the early 2000s, someone turned me onto *Freedom Flight*, as well as Shuggie's follow-up record, *Inspiration Information*. When I heard his original version of "Strawberry Letter #23" I was gobsmacked, as the Brothers Johnson had basically lifted Shuggie's arrangement exactly. Like Todd Rundgren and Prince, Shuggie played all of the instruments on his record, so he was an innovator in that department too. Compared to the Brothers Johnson version, Shuggie's is a little earthier, with some acoustic guitar on there, but when that guitar break comes in toward the end, it's absolutely brilliant. I was inspired to recreate it and write a tune around it, and that's what became "Shuggie" on my new record.

FIGURE 1 represents the higher of the two harmonized guitars. Over the chord progression Gmaj7 - B♭maj7 - Fma7/A - A♭maj7, phrases based on 16th-note triplets are played on each of the four downbeats, and these melodic shapes change slightly to accommodate each chord. I begin over Gmaj7 with the notes F♯, E, D and B, which translates intervallically to the major 7th, 6th, 5th and major 3rd.

As the subsequent chord, B♭maj7, is one and one half steps above Gmaj7, the riff likewise moves up and is composed of the same intervallic relationships via the notes A, G, F and D. Over the Fmaj7/A chord I chose to play the same notes, which now translate intervallically to major 3rd, 2nd, root and 6th. For A♭maj7, I revert to the same chordal/intervallic relationships, with the notes G, F, E♭ and C. The phrase ends on a sustained F♯, the major 7th of Gmaj7. All of the notes in **FIGURE 1** are picked down-down-up-down, with some light palm muting employed to add a percussive quality.

FIGURE 2 illustrates the chord voicings I use here. Over Gmaj7, I like to think of the lines as being based on the D major pentatonic scale (D, E, F♯, A, B), as shown in **FIGURE 3**. And, as illustrated in **FIGURES 4** and **5** over B♭maj7, I think of the phrase as being based on F major pentatonic (F, G, A, C, D). **FIGURE 6** depicts E♭ major pentatonic, as played over A♭maj7.

The lower harmony is shown in **FIGURE 7**, starting on D over Gmaj7, and these intervallic relationships work in a similar way to **FIGURE 1**, with the harmony based on 3rds and 4ths.

FIG. 1

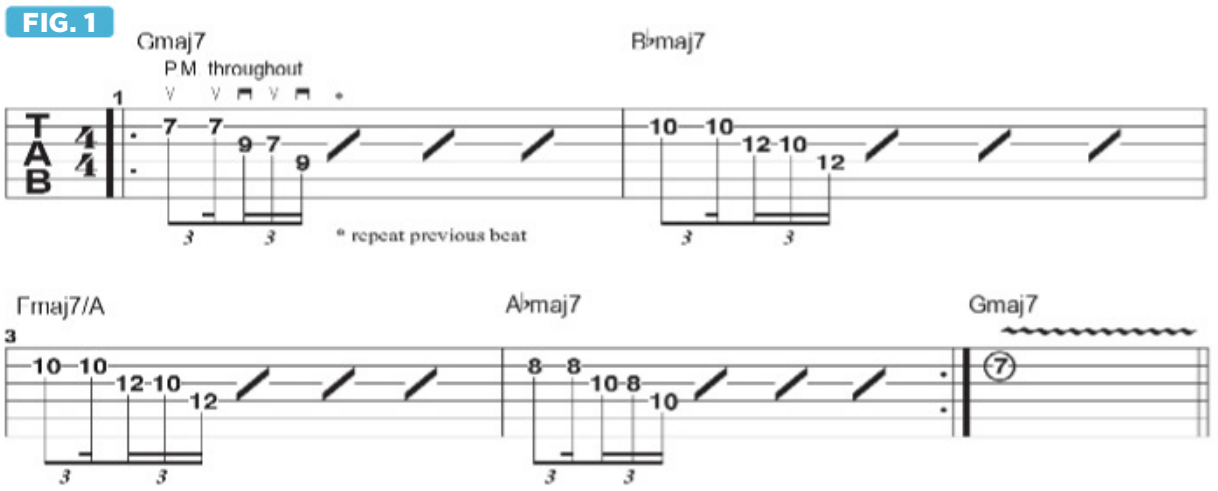


FIG. 2

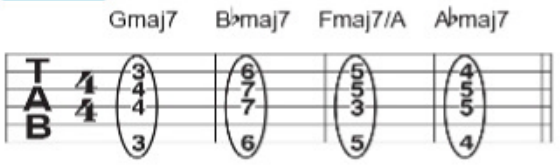


FIG. 3 D major pentatonic scale

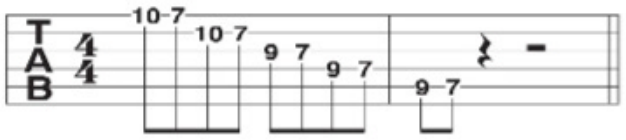


FIG. 4 F major pentatonic scale

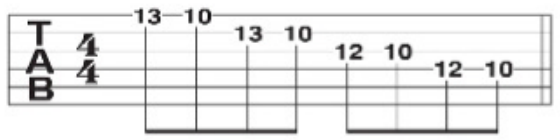


FIG. 5

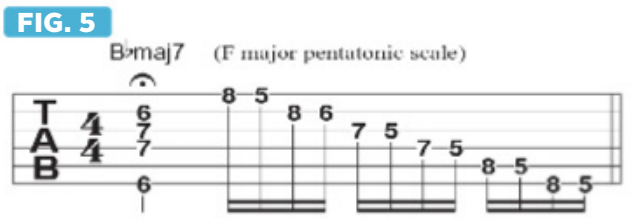


FIG. 6

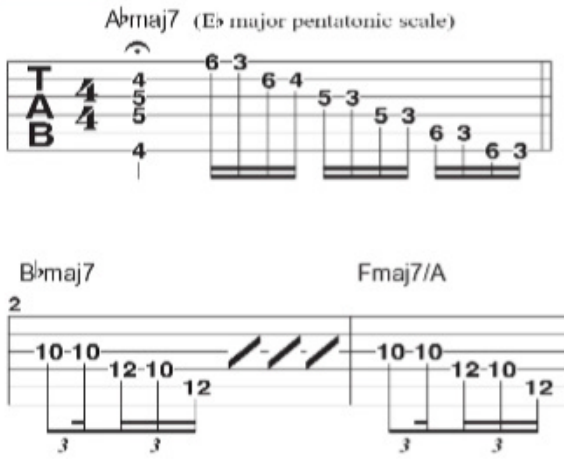
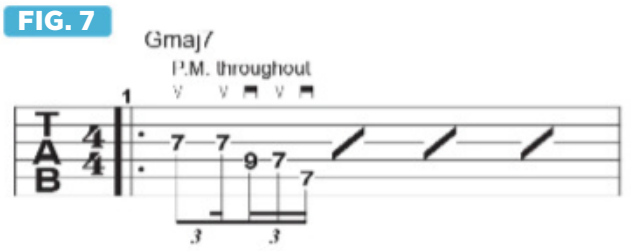


FIG. 7



Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. His new album, *Electric Truth*, is out now. Visit andytimmons.com and guitarxperience.net to check out his recordings and many instructional releases.

SIMONE CECHETTI

LIVE FROM FLAT V

by Josh Smith

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/september2022

PICK AND ROLL

Using hybrid picking, and how to play "Triple J Hoedown"

HELLO EVERYONE, AND welcome to my new *Guitar World* column. Through the course of these lessons, I will demonstrate many of the different approaches I use for both rhythm guitar and lead improvisation, and my hope is that you will find the material presented here to be useful to you in your overall playing and songwriting endeavors.

I'd like to begin with a look at my song "Triple J Hoedown," which I had originally recorded for my 2009 album, *Inception*. But we're going to check out the more recent live version, from my new *Live at the Spud* record, which was recorded at the legendary Baked Potato in Los Angeles.

"Triple J Hoedown" is a bit of an opus. I wrote the tune when I was 17, and it has lots of twists and turns. I was looking to write a song that goes through many different variations and has a lot of "stuff" in it. At its heart, you could say it's a "bluegrass/rock/fusion" tune, and many of the parts are performed with hybrid picking, which is a pick-hand technique wherein the strings are articulated with a combination of flatpicking and fingerpicking, often picking downstrokes on the lower strings and fingerpicking the higher strings, either simultaneously or in alternation.

The tune is in the key of G and begins with the riff illustrated in **FIGURE 1**. After the initial implied G chord, I present the main theme shown in bars 1-4, using picked downstrokes to sound the notes on the A string and fingerpicking the notes on the D and G strings with my index and middle fingers, respectively. Allow all of the notes to ring throughout, but also employ a bit of palm-muting by resting the edge of your pick-hand palm across the bridge saddles. While the bass is pedaling a G note, the guitar part walks down through chordal references to D to C to Gmaj7/B to Gm(maj7)/B♭.

This is followed by the phrase shown in **FIGURE 2**. Here I'm using a "rolling" hybrid picking technique of steadily moving across the 5th-3rd strings in steady 16th notes on beats 1 and 2 of each bar, followed by two-string chordal accents.

FIGURE 3 shows the third phrase of the song, which is basically the melody. In bars 1-4 I use hybrid picking to articulate phrases that are based on the G major hexatonic scale (G, A, B, C, D, E). In bars 5-6, I shift to Em and then return to G in bars 7 and 8.

This is followed by the phrase shown in **FIGURE 4**, which begins with a Beatles-like walkup from C to A7/C♯ to Dadd4 to E♭add♯2 to Em. Bars 4 and 5 are played over the "two-major" chord, A7, and then the figure ends on the V (five) chord, D, after which the entire phrase repeats.

Once you have these phrases together, you will be ready for part two of "Triple J Hoedown," which I'll present next month.

FIG. 1

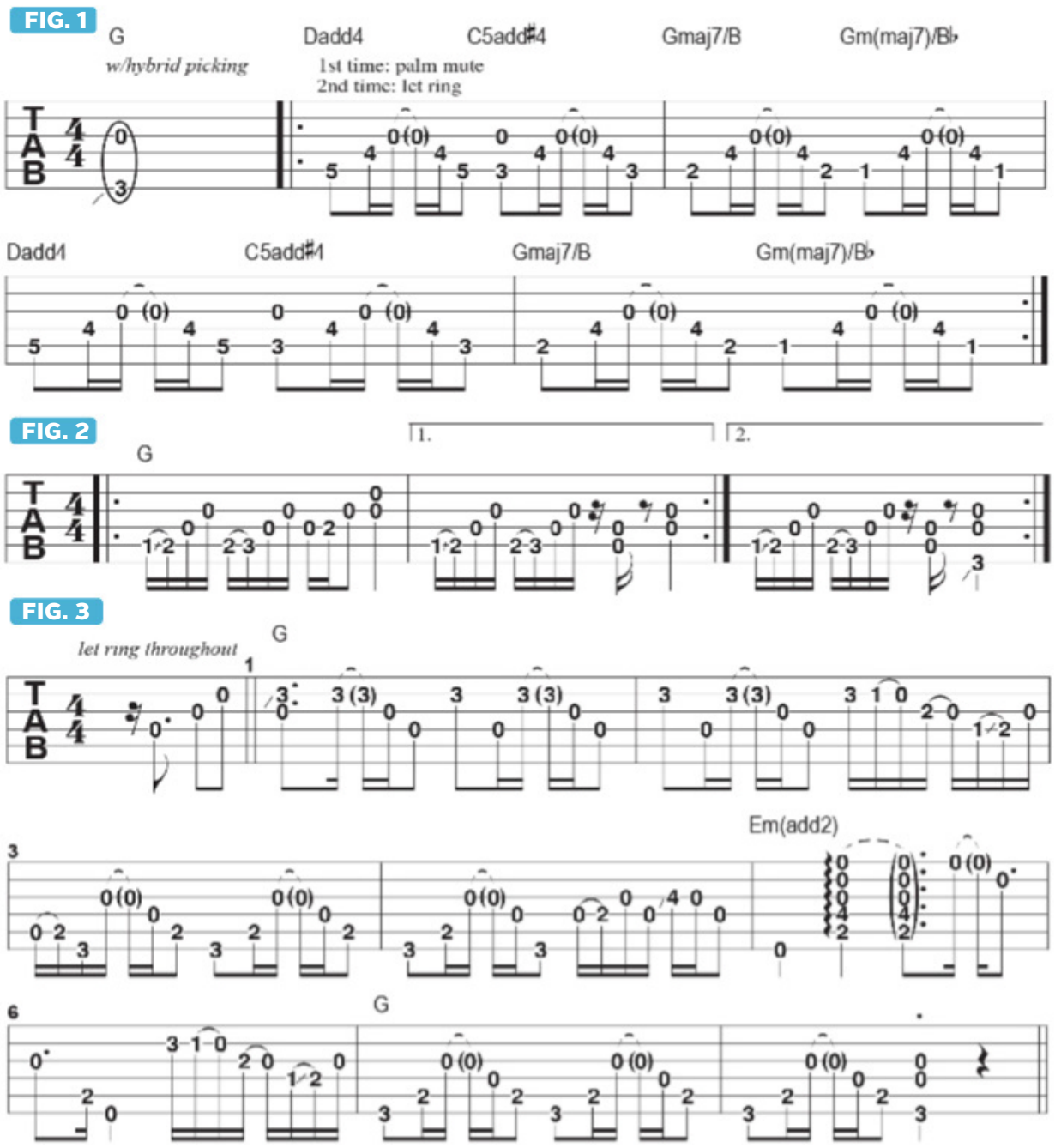
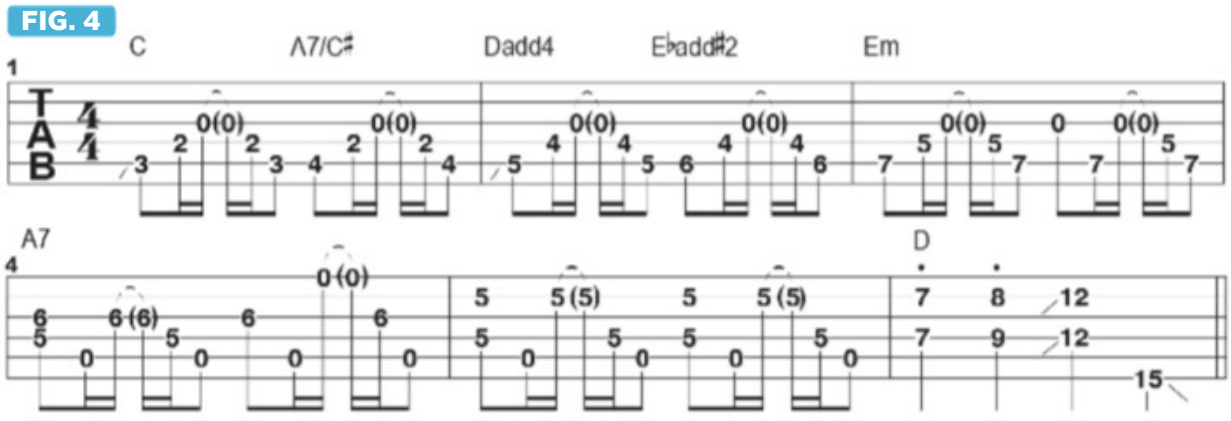


FIG. 2

FIG. 3

FIG. 4



OLLY CURTIS/FUTURE

Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-around tone wizard (not to mention an effective instructor). His new album, 2022's *Bird of Passage*, is out now. For more info, check out joshsmithguitar.com.

Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS **By Jimmy Brown**

"REMEMBER WHEN"
Bad Wolves

GUITARIST DOC COYLE crafted this highly appealing modern metal song's rhythm and lead parts using an unusual 7-string tuning of Csus4 (low to high: G, C, G, C, F, G, C). This is essentially a whole-step-down transposition of the popular 6-string "DADGAD" tuning with a low A added on the bottom string ("A-DADGAD"). As is customary, we've transcribed the song thinking in the more player-friendly non-transposed tuning, with the understanding and indication that everything sounds in the key of C minor, down a whole step from what looks like and is written as being in the key of D minor.

Looking at the frames, to acquaint yourself with the chord shapes Coyle uses in the song, you'll see how the altered tuning presents opportunities to employ both standard, two-finger root-5th power chord grips, on the bottom two strings and, on strings 6 and 5, drop-D-style one-finger barres. Coyle makes great use of this convenient single-digit grip during sections D and H, where he stacks either a major or minor 3rd on top of his root-5th F5, G5 and B♭5 shapes to create root-5th-10th "spread" voicings of Gm, F and B♭, which effectively cut through the mix with the high-gain tone he's using.

Coyle's solo (see section F, bars 29-32) is short and tasteful, featuring a combination of lyrical single-note lines and major- and minor-3rd dyads on strings 2 and 3, which, due to the altered tuning, entail the use of "deceptive" fingering shapes that look like what would be perfect and augmented 4ths in standard tuning.

When playing the syncopated, palm-muted single-note line on the 6th string in bars 1-4, you'll want to employ a "pendulum picking" approach, keeping the pick alternating back and forth across the string in an unbroken down-up-down-up sequence on each beat, as if you were alternate picking a steady stream 16th notes, allowing the pick to silently pass over the string with a "phantom" downstroke or upstroke during the 16th rests and after each eighth note. Keeping the perpetual motion going in this way will ensure a smooth, flowing rhythmic feel and technique, with any note falling on what would be the first or third 16th note of the beat being picked with a downstroke and any note falling on the second or fourth 16th note being caught with an upstroke.

"BRON-YR-AUR"
Led Zeppelin

THIS SOLO INSTRUMENTAL gem, which was recorded during the *Led Zeppelin III* sessions in 1971, features guitarist Jimmy Page employing his highly developed acoustic fingerpicking skills to brilliant musical effect. He uses a "forward roll" pattern — thumb-index-middle-ring — for most of the tune and briefly interrupts and reverses the pattern during every other bar of the main theme (beginning with bars 9 and 41). The trickiest parts to play are the arpeggiated G/B, G7/C and Fadd9 chords, first appearing in bars 9, 11 and 17. When fingerpicking these chords, assign a different pick-hand finger to each of the top four strings, with the pinkie picking the notes on the high E string and the thumb covering the bottom two strings. Or temporarily reassign the index, middle and ring fingers to the top three strings and the thumb to strings 5 and 4 for the first four notes, reverting back to the starting roll pattern for the next four notes in each of these bars.

Experiment with different pick-hand postures to find one that feels comfortable and best enables you to control your technique. Lightly resting your palm on the bridge can help stabilize your hand and give your fingers a close tactile reference point. Anchoring the hand like this also allows you to lightly palm mute the bass strings, which can help give the low notes more clarity and definition.

For those who don't object to the notion of tampering with a masterpiece, I have an alternative way of fingerpicking "Bron-Yr-Aur" that I personally find both easier to perform and equally flowing and pleasing to the ear, albeit with a slightly different feel. Instead of adhering to the thumb-index-middle-ring roll pattern, which is similar to what Page also used on "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You," I substitute a common quasi-Travis picking pattern in certain bars, wherein the thumb plays an alternating bass line, similar to what Page does on "Going to California" and the patterns featured on other acoustic rock classics like "Dust in the Wind" by Kansas and Fleetwood Mac's "Landslide." For the recurring C chord in "Bron-Yr-Aur," the order of the second and third notes of each beat would be reversed, a subtle alteration of the line's contour that is hardly noticeable when performing the piece at tempo.

"AMERICA" (PT. 1 OF 2)
Yes

RECORDED DURING YES' 1971 *Fragile* sessions, this epic and highly derivative prog-rock arrangement of a folk song by Simon and Garfunkel ranks among the band's most inspired musical offerings and features some of guitarist Steve Howe's and bassist Chris Squire's finest playing. Due to the track's extended length (10:31), we made the unusual and necessary decision to present our 23-page transcription over the course of two issues — this one and the next — with the split point being at 6:10, at the end of page 13.

Howe recorded this song with his Gibson ES-5 Switchmaster archtop guitar, a "deluxe jazz box" that sports a full-size hollow body and three pickups, plugged straight into a loud, clean Fender Dual Showman tube amp. The result is a big, bold, dynamic tone that inspired the guitarist to craft a plethora of highly inventive riffs and improvised lead licks that feature his signature bright and twangy yet fat-sounding tone. Howe's richly eclectic musical influences and guitar playing approaches, which meld stylistic elements and playing techniques drawn from rock, rockabilly, country, classical, blues, R&B, funk, folk and other genres, are gloriously evidenced and expressed throughout this performance, as he articulates and develops classical-style, scale- and arpeggio-based melodic motifs for its more structured ensemble sections and gets funky and playful during the moments of improvisational opportunity, such as the solo section that gets under way at section P (bar 167) and carries over into part 2 of our transcription.

Steve makes great use of both *crosspicking* — using a plectrum to flatpick one-note-per string "banjo-style" arpeggios — and *hybrid picking* (pick-and-fingers technique) to sound notes on different and often non-adjacent strings simultaneously, such as the sliding and shifting octaves at section E (bar 41), where he takes the uncommon approach of fretting each octave shape on the D and high E strings.

Although he's playing on a built-for-jazz instrument, Howe approaches it with an aggressive blues-rock spirit, serving up lots of wailing string bends, adorning held notes with soulful finger vibratos and liberally employing double hammer-ons and pull-offs in his slinky melodic inventions and fills.

CONGRATULATIONS, GRETCHEN MENN

No Limits Challenge Winner!

In early April, Martin – in partnership with *Guitar World* – launched the No Limits Challenge competition, a celebration of our SC line of acoustic guitars. The competition featured eight YouTube-savvy guitarists facing off against one another, covering tunes one wouldn't normally associate with an acoustic. It's been a long, hard road, but, after nearly two months, we are proud to announce the victor, Gretchen Menn!

C.F. Martin & Co. EST. 1833

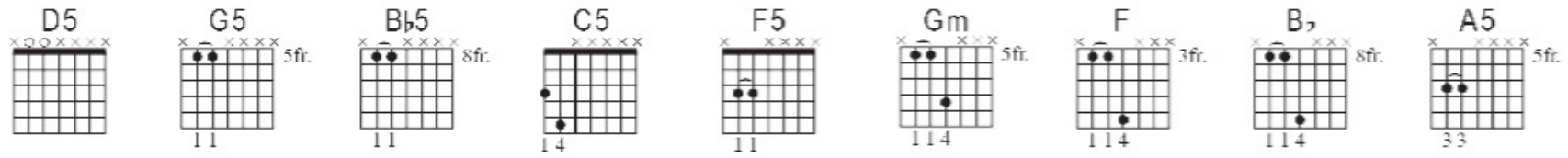
“REMEMBER WHEN”

Bad Wolves

As heard on **DISOBEY**

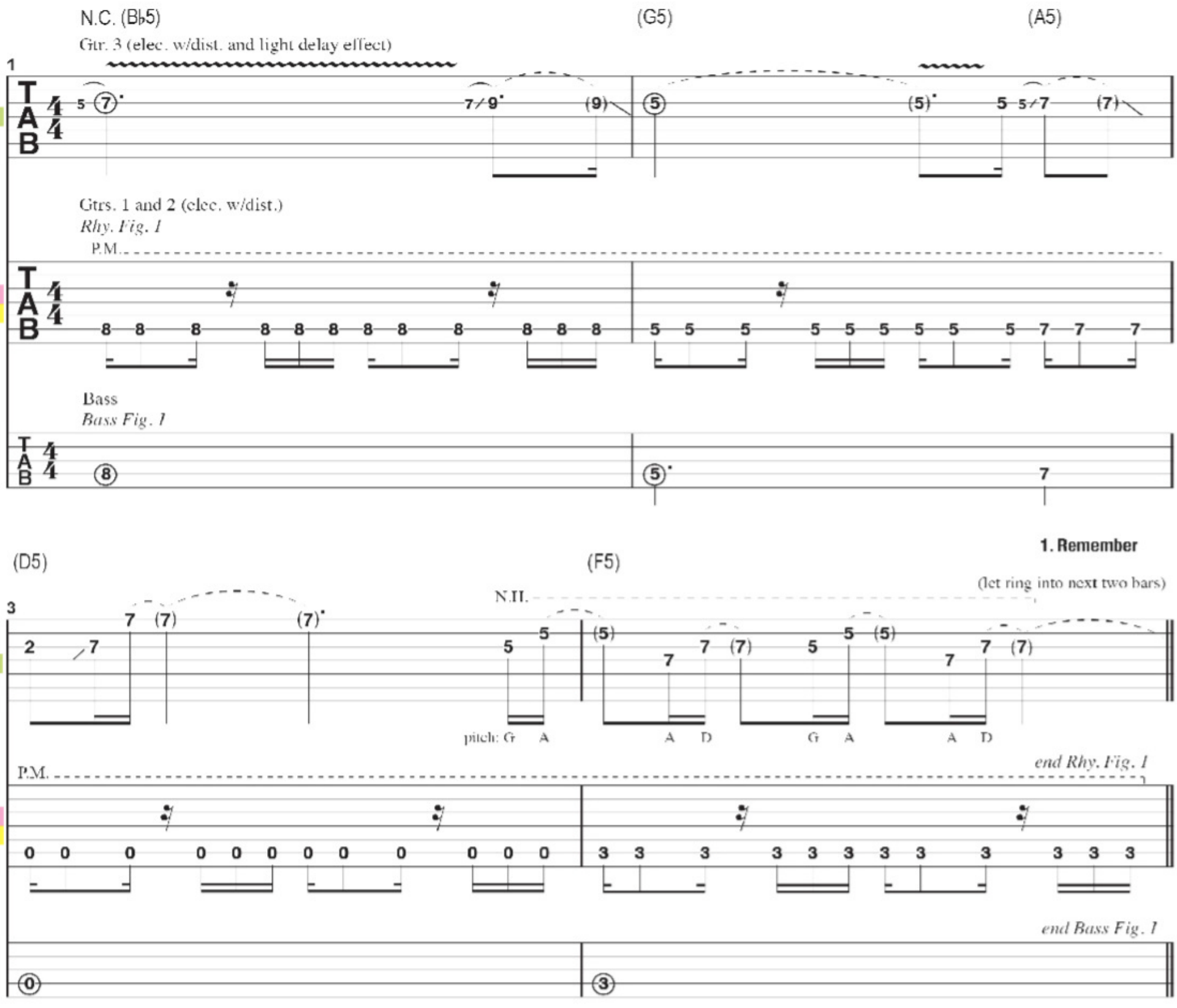
Words and Music by JOHN BOECKLIN, THOMAS CUMMINGS, ANDREW FULK and JOSH STROCK • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are 7-string guitars in open Dsus4 "ADADGAD" tuning, tuned down one whole step (low to high: G, C, G, C, F, G, C).
5-string bass tuning, low to high: G, C, G, C, F.
All music sounds in the key of C minor, one whole step lower than written.



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 86



“REMEMBER WHEN”
WORDS AND MUSIC BY JOHN BOECKLIN, THOMAS CUMMINGS, ANDREW FULK AND JOSH STROCK
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B Verses (0:11, 0:56)

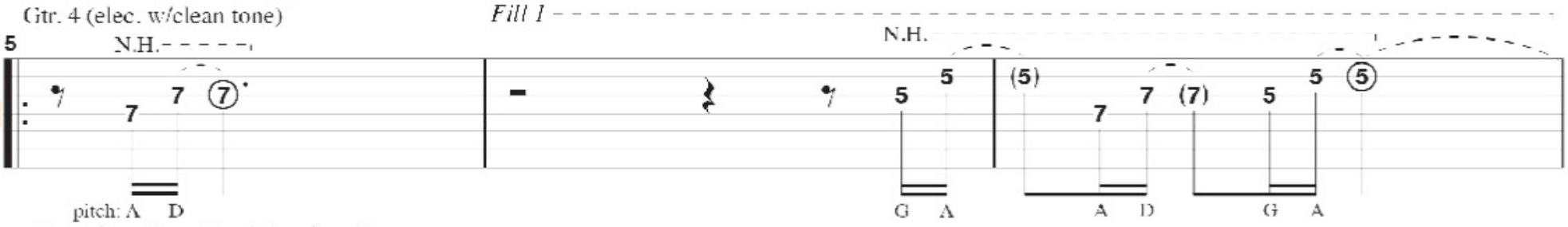
when) 1. When it was 1992 two little kids stealing records skippin' school We must have been like only ten
when) 2. When it was 2002 you started slinging coke and got the dopest pair of shoes But yo this house just ain't a home since our

N.C. (B♭5) (G5) (A5) (D5)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 1)

Gtr. 4 (elec. w/clean tone)

Fill 1



Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 1)

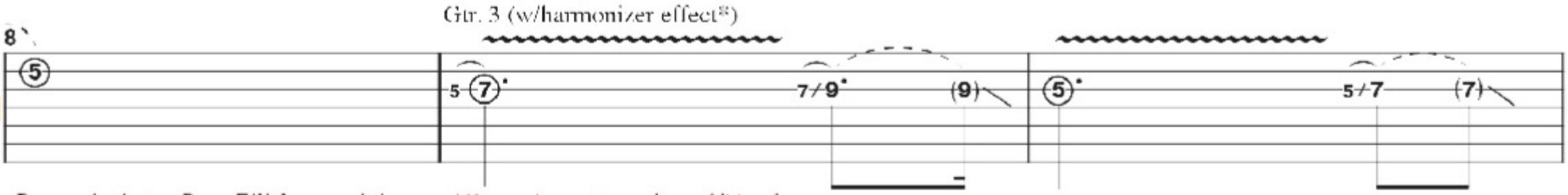
taking life for granted 'till we learned it had an end And time is something they say you never appreciate 'til you age
(Remember when)
father hit the bottle and our mother hit the road And time is something they say you never understand until it slips away

(F5) (B♭5) (G5) (A5)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play first three bars of Rhy. Fig. 1, second verse (see bar 1)

Gtr. 4 plays Fill 1 (see bar 6)

Gtr. 3 (w/harmonizer effect*)



Bass substitutes Bass Fill 1 second time (see below)

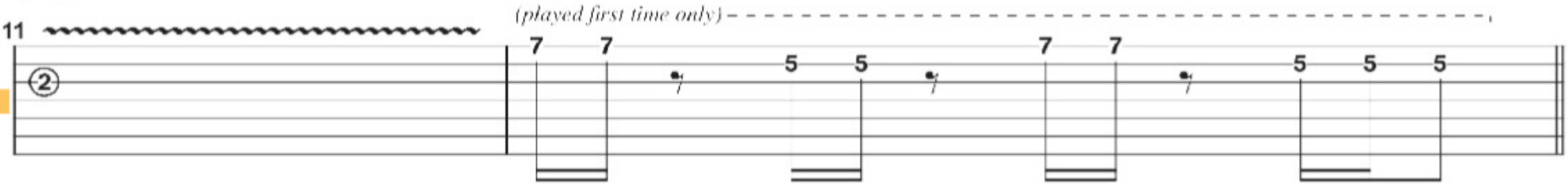
**Harmonizer set to produce additional pitch one octave higher.*

Bass plays first three bars of Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 1)

And to this day you never knew I wanted to be just like you
And looking back I think you knew I wanted to be just like you

(D5) (F5)

(played first time only)

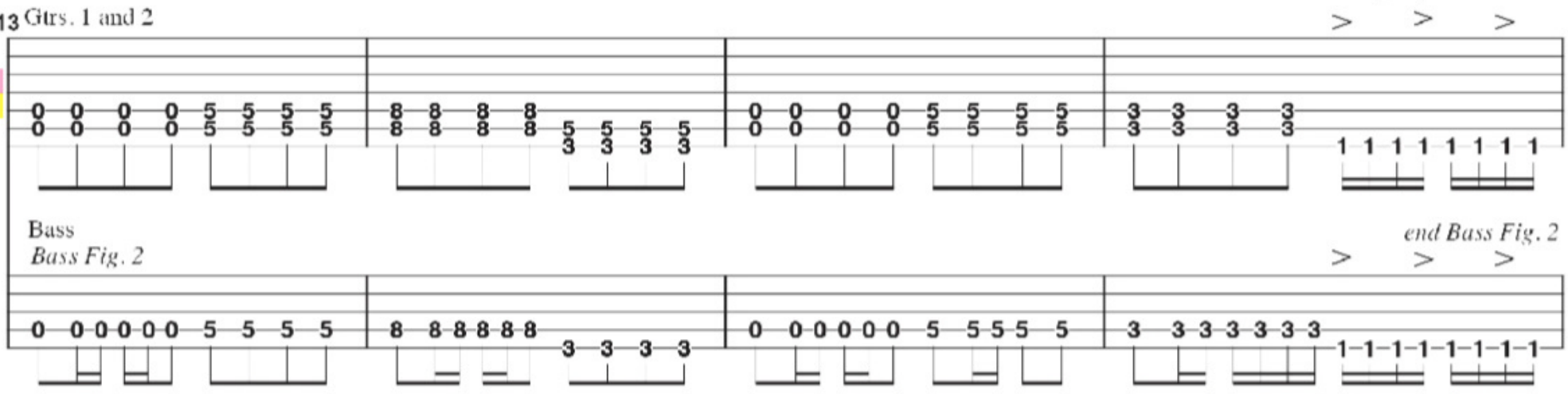


C Chorus (0:34, 1:18)

only knew then what I know now then what I know now If I

D5 G5 B♭5 C5 D5 G5 F5 N.C. (B♭5)

Gtrs. 1 and 2



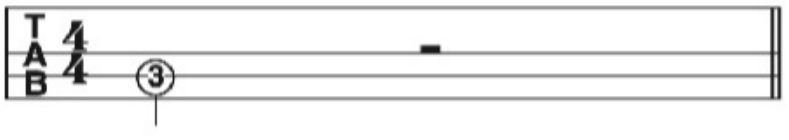
Bass

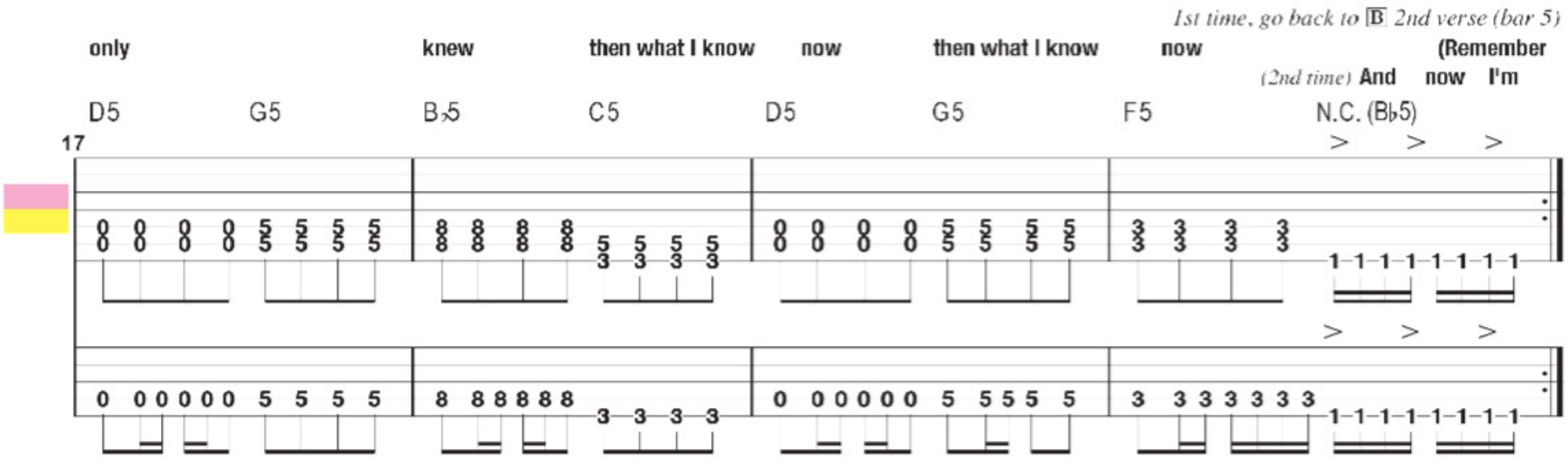
Bass Fig. 2

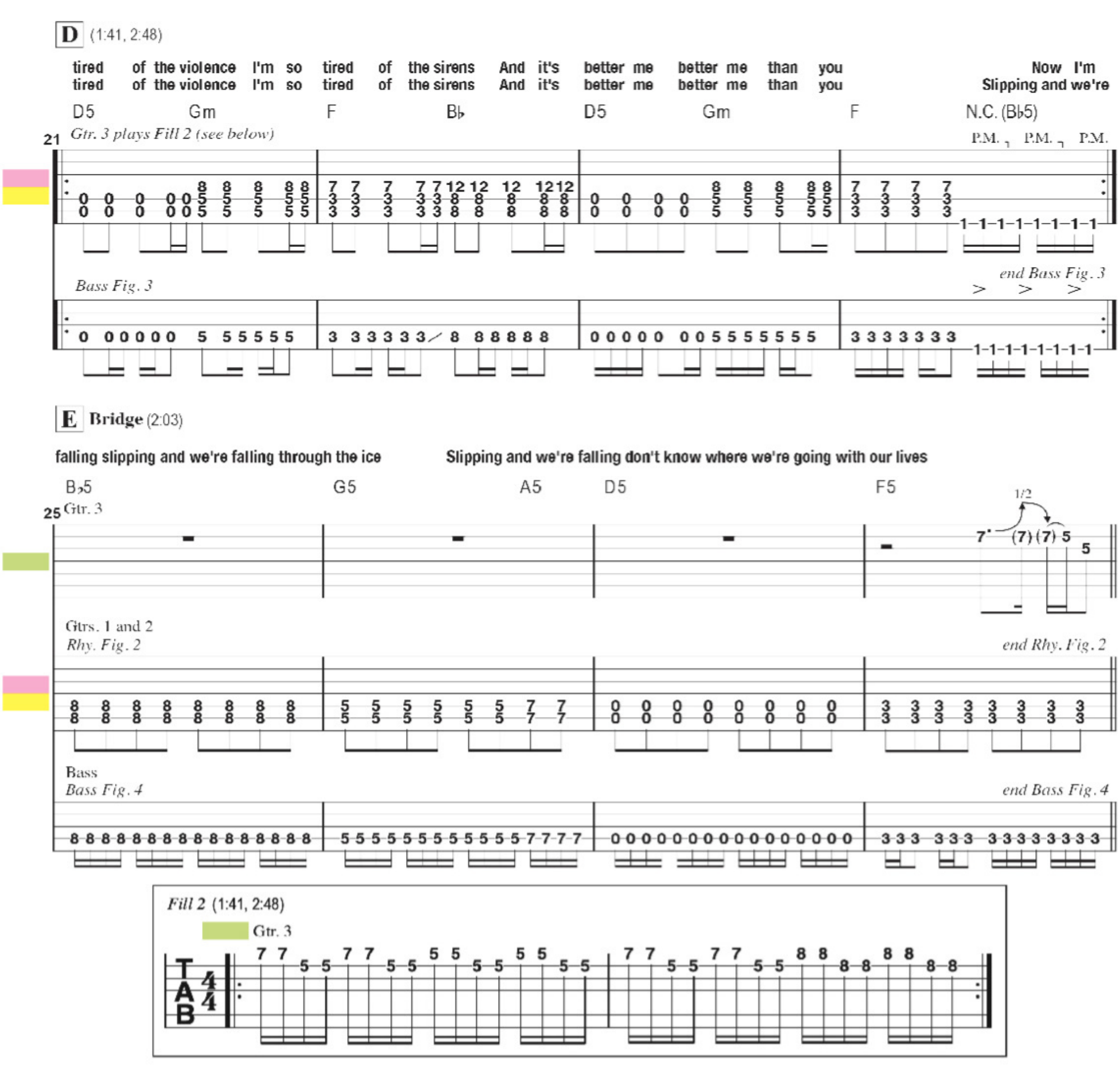
end Bass Fig. 2

Bass Fill 1 (1:05)

N.C. (F5)




1st time, go back to B 2nd verse (bar 5)
only knew then what I know now then what I know now (Remember
(2nd time) And now I'm
D5 G5 B♭5 C5 D5 G5 F5 N.C. (B♭5)
17


D (1:41, 2:48)
tired of the violence I'm so tired of the sirens And it's better me than you
tired of the violence I'm so tired of the sirens And it's better me than you
Now I'm
Slipping and we're
D5 Gm F B♭ D5 Gm F N.C. (B♭5)
21
Gtr. 3 plays Fill 2 (see below)
P.M. P.M. P.M.
Bass Fig. 3
end Bass Fig. 3
E Bridge (2:03)
falling slipping and we're falling through the ice
Slipping and we're falling don't know where we're going with our lives
B♭5 G5 A5 D5 F5
25
Gtr. 3
1/2
Gtrs. 1 and 2
Rhy. Fig. 2
end Rhy. Fig. 2
Bass
Bass Fig. 4
end Bass Fig. 4

Fill 2 (1:41, 2:48)
Gtr. 3

F **Guitar Solo** (2:14)

B♭5 G5 A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 25)

29 Gtr. 3

P.M.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 (see bar 25)

If I

D5 F5

31

1/2

Slight P.H.

G **Breakdown** (2:26)

only knew then what I know now then what I know now If I

D5 G5 B♭5 C5 D5 G5 F5 N.C. (B♭5)

33 Gtr. 1

Gtrs. 1 and 2

only knew then what I know now then what I know now Now I'm

D5 G5 B♭5 C5 D5 G5 F5 N.C. (B♭5)

37

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 13)

H (2:48)

tired of the violence I'm so tired of the sirens And it's better me better me than you Now I'm

tired of the violence I'm so tired of the sirens And it's better me better me than you Slipping and we're

D5 Gm F B♭ D5 Gm F N.C. (B♭5)

41 *Gtr. 3 plays Fill 2 (see below bar 25)*

P.M. P.M. P.M.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 21)

I **Outro** (3:10)

falling slipping and we're falling through the ice Slipping and we're falling don't know where we're going with our lives Slipping and we're

N.C. (B♭5) (G5) (A5) (D5) (F5)

Synth keyboard arr. for gtr.

(repeat and fade out)

45 P.M.

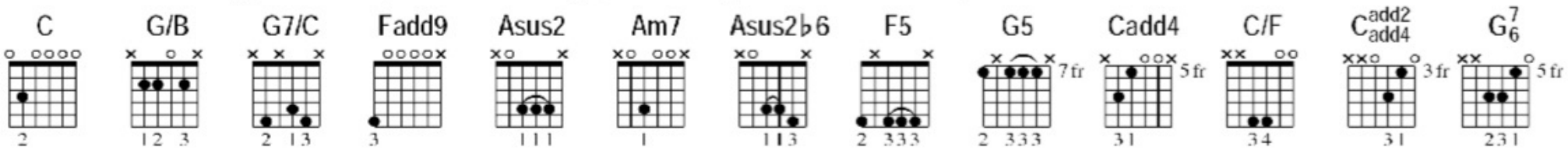
“BRON-YR-AUR”

Led Zeppelin

As heard on **PHYSICAL GRAFFITI**

Music by **JIMMY PAGE** • *Transcribed by* **ANDY ALEDORT**

Acoustic guitar in open C6 tuning (low to high: C A C G C E).



Moderately ♩ = 88

C

Acous. Gtr. (w/ambient reverb)

let ring throughout

fingerstyle

1

pp *(fade in)*

mp

sim.

mf

(0:11)

8 G/B C G7/C C

13 G/B C G7/C C Fadd9

18 C Fadd9 C G/B C

(0:33)

23 G7/C C C G/B Asus2 Am7 C G/B

28 Asus2 Am7 C G/B Asus2 Asus2♭6 Asus2

33 F5 G5 C F5 G5 C F5 G5

“BRON-YR-AUR” MUSIC BY JIMMY PAGE
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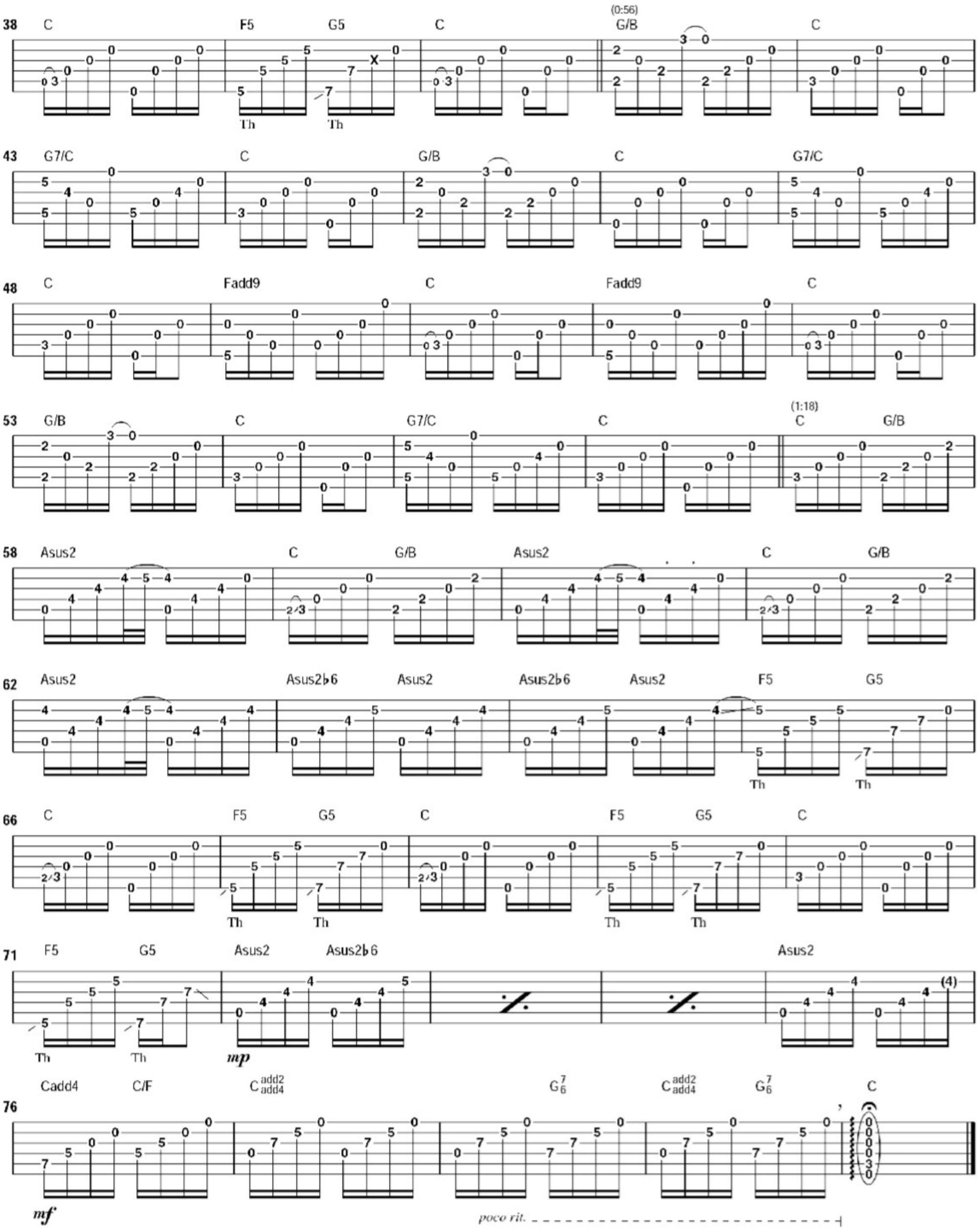
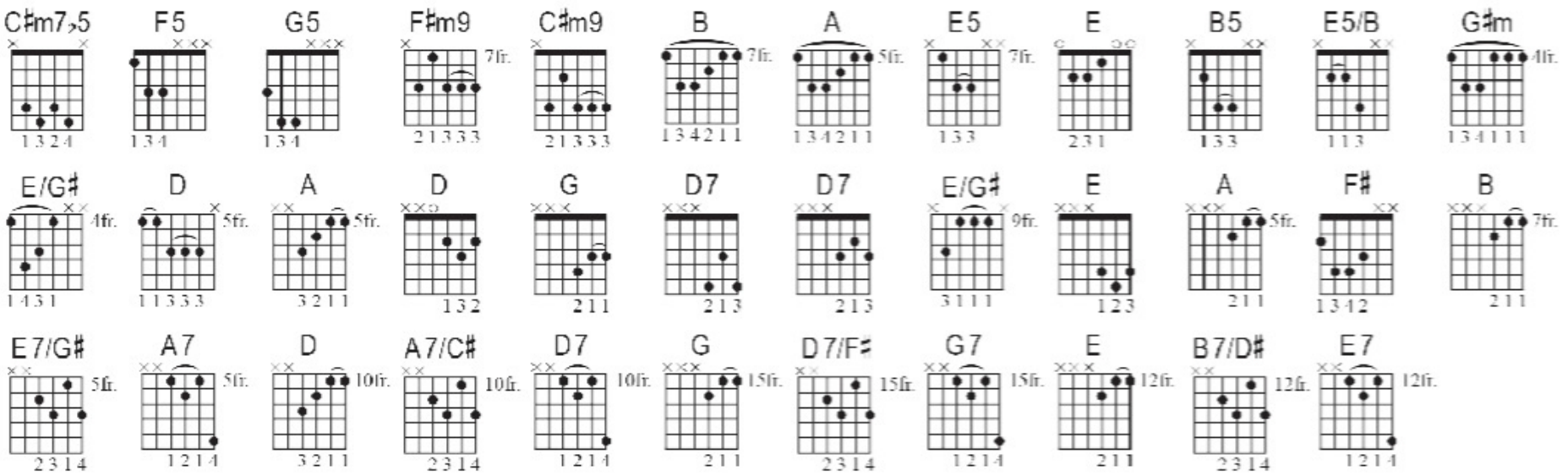

38
C
F5
G5
C
(0:56)
G/B
C
Th
Th
43
G7/C
C
G/B
C
G7/C
48
C
Fadd9
C
Fadd9
C
53
G/B
C
G7/C
C
(1:18)
C
G/B
58
Asus2
C
G/B
Asus2
C
G/B
62
Asus2
Asus2♭6
Asus2
Asus2♭6
Asus2
F5
G5
Th
Th
66
C
F5
G5
C
F5
G5
C
Th
Th
Th
Th
71
F5
G5
Asus2
Asus2♭6
Asus2
Th
Th
mp
Cadd4
C/F
C add2 add4
G 7 6
C add2 add4
G 7 6
C
76
mf
poco rit.

“AMERICA” (PART 1 OF 2)

Yes

As heard on **YESTERDAYS**

Words and Music by **PAUL SIMON** • *Transcribed by* **JEFF PERRIN**



2 111

A **Intro** (0:01)

Moderately Fast ♩ = 140 (♫ = ♩ ³ ♪)

N.C. (D) (G)

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/light overdrive)

1

Gtr. 2 organ arr. for guitar)

Bass

Bass Fig. 1

(D) (G) (D)

5

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 1)

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B (0:16)

(♩ = 128)

(G) (D) (D/C) (G/B) (Gm/B♭) (D/A)

9 Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Bass *Bass Fig. 2* *end Bass Fig. 2*

(G)

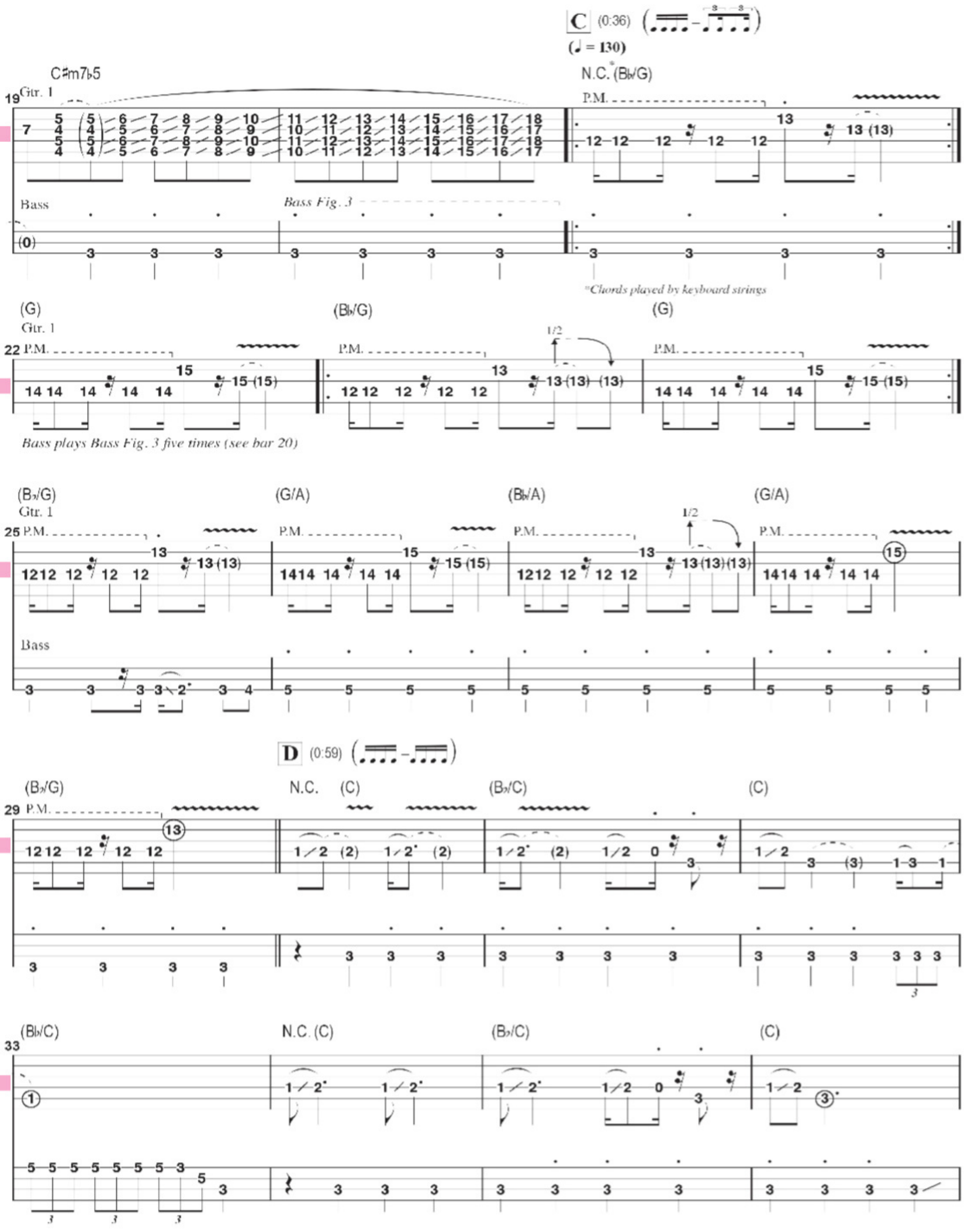
13

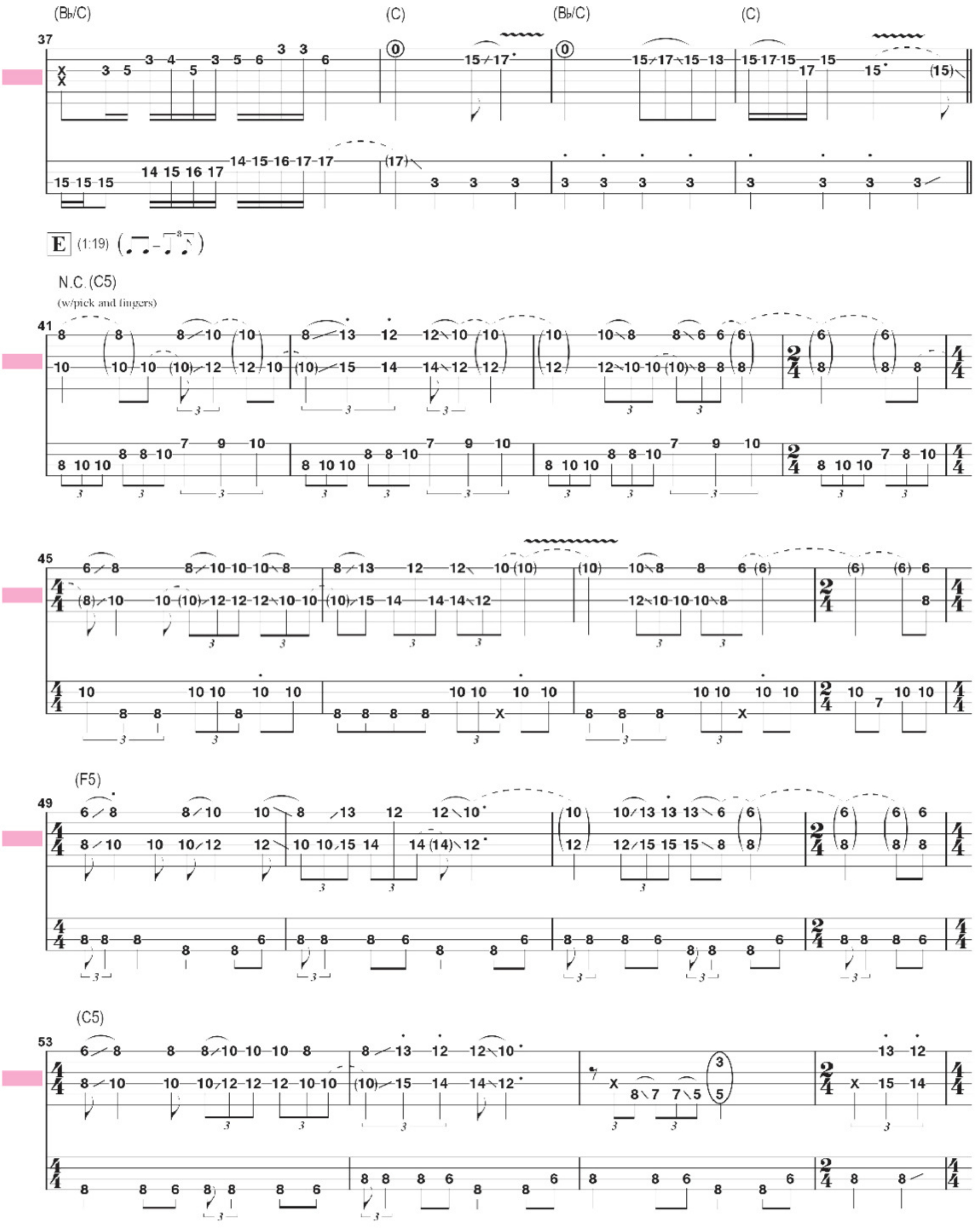
(D) (D/C) (G/B) (Gm/B♭) (D/A)

16 Gtr. 1

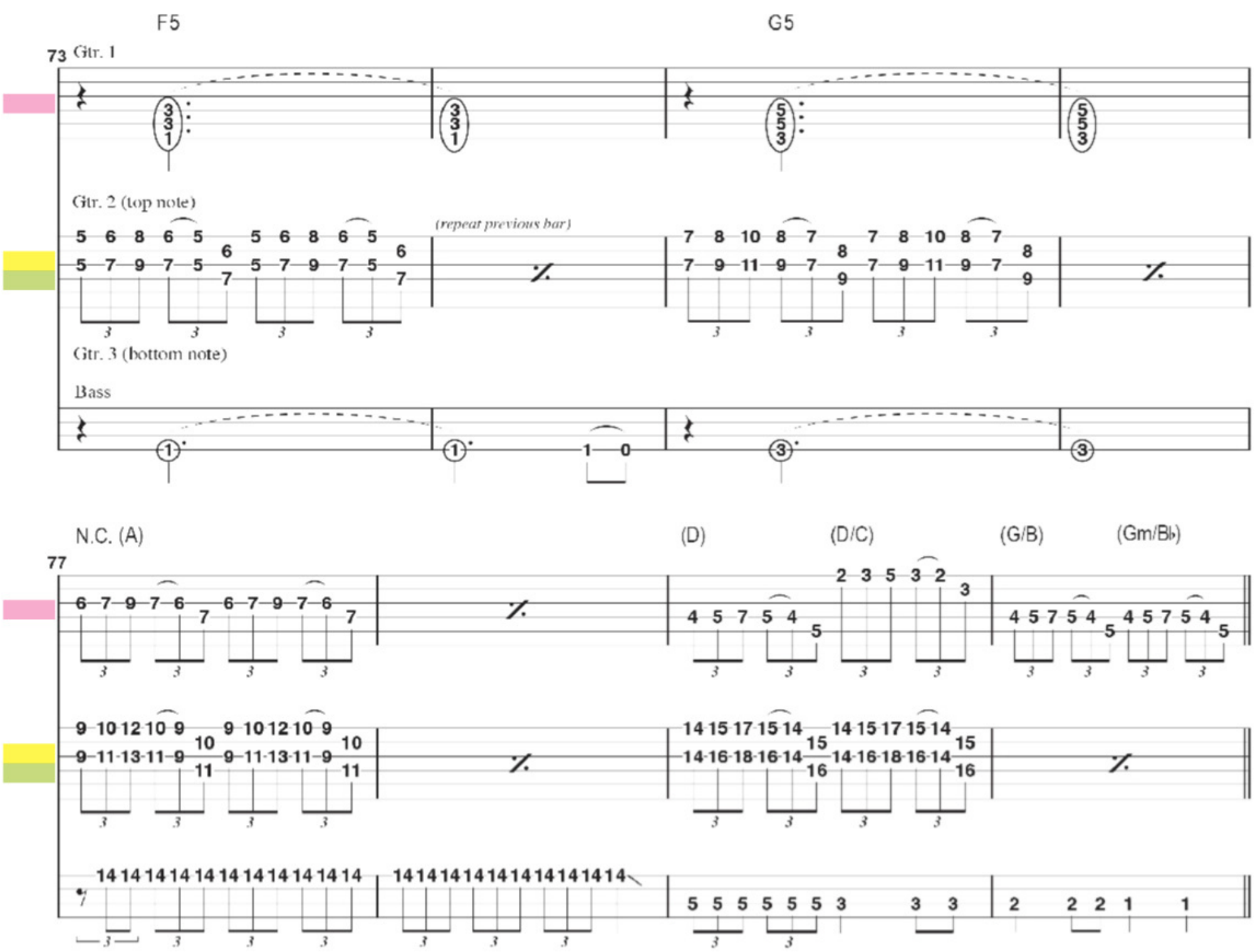
Gtr. 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 10)


C (0:36)
(♩ = 130)
C♯m7♭5
N.C.* (B♭/G)
19 Gtr. 1
P.M.
Bass
Bass Fig. 3
*Chords played by keyboard strings
(G)
(B♭/G)
(G)
22 Gtr. 1
P.M.
1/2
Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 five times (see bar 20)
(B♭/G)
(G/A)
(B♭/A)
(G/A)
25 Gtr. 1
P.M.
1/2
Bass
D (0:59)
(B♭/G)
N.C.
(C)
(B♭/C)
(C)
29 P.M.
(B♭/C)
N.C. (C)
(B♭/C)
(C)
33

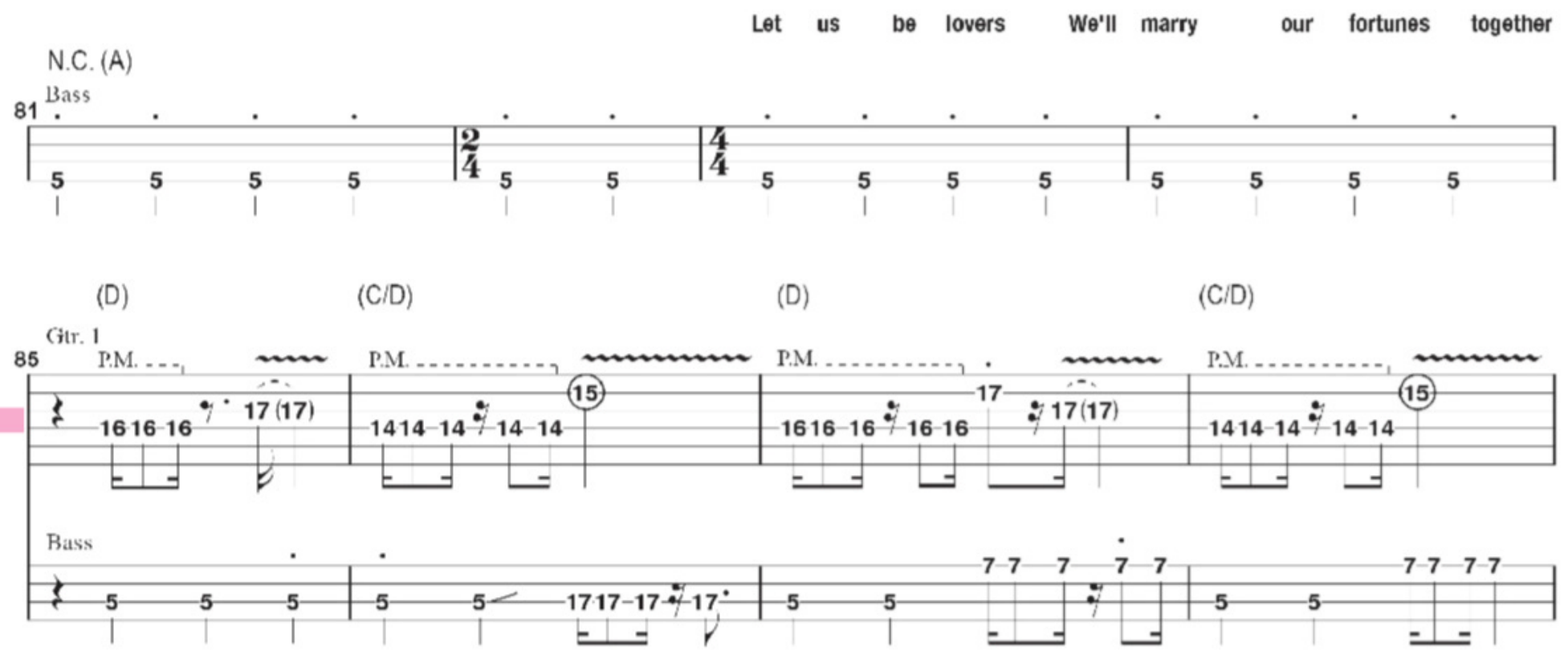

(B♭/C)
(C)
(B♭/C)
(C)
37
E (1:19)
N.C. (C5)
(w/pick and fingers)
41
45
(F5)
49
(C5)
53

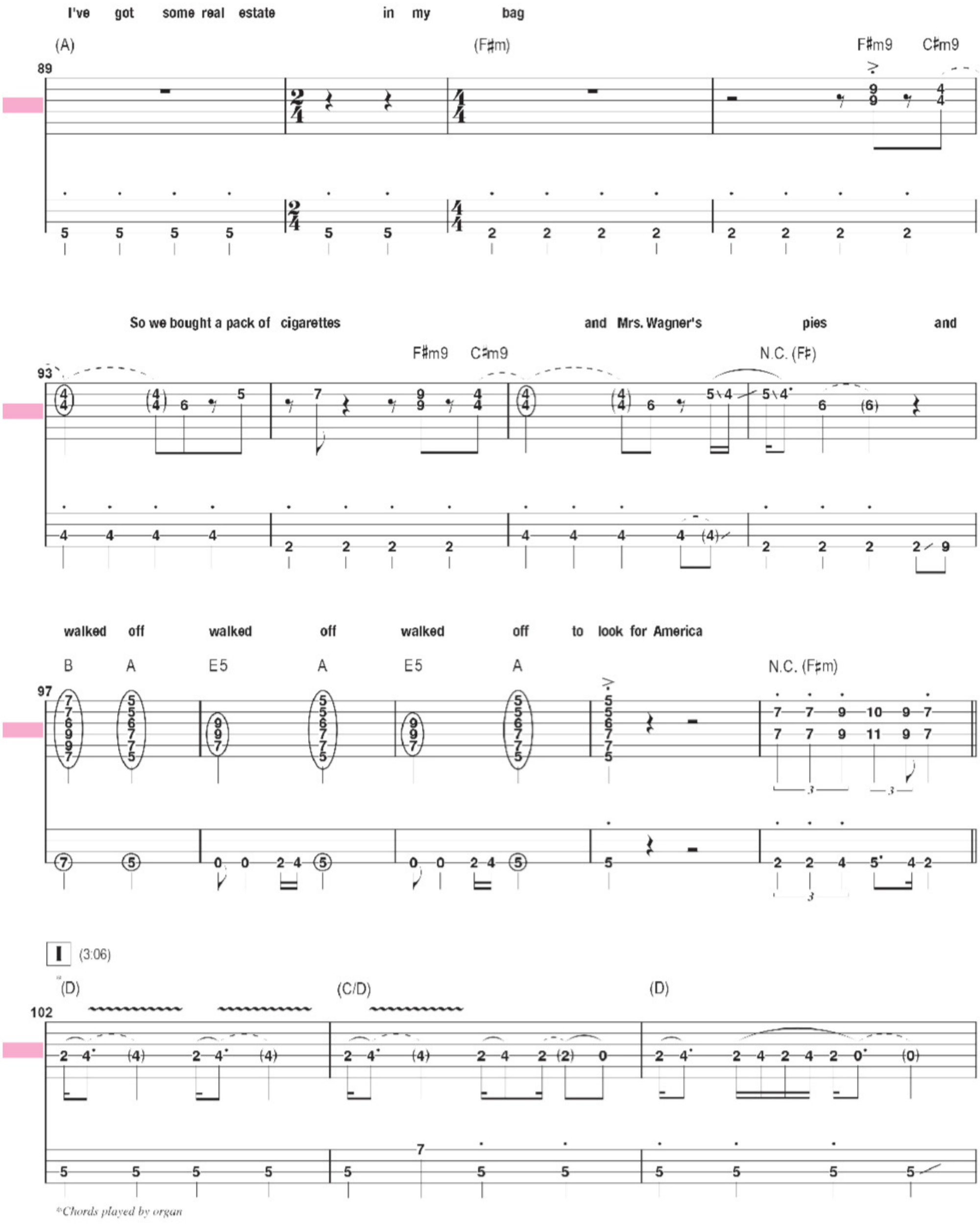
(G5) (C) (G5) (C) (G5) (C) (G5)
57
w/fdbk.
F (1:52)
(G) (B♭/G) (G) (B♭)
61
P.M.
1/2
G (1:59) (♩ = 138)
(C) (G/B) (Am) (G) (F)
65
Gtr. 1 (w/pick)
Gtr. 2
Bass
(C) (G/B) (Am) (G) (F)
69
Gtr. 1

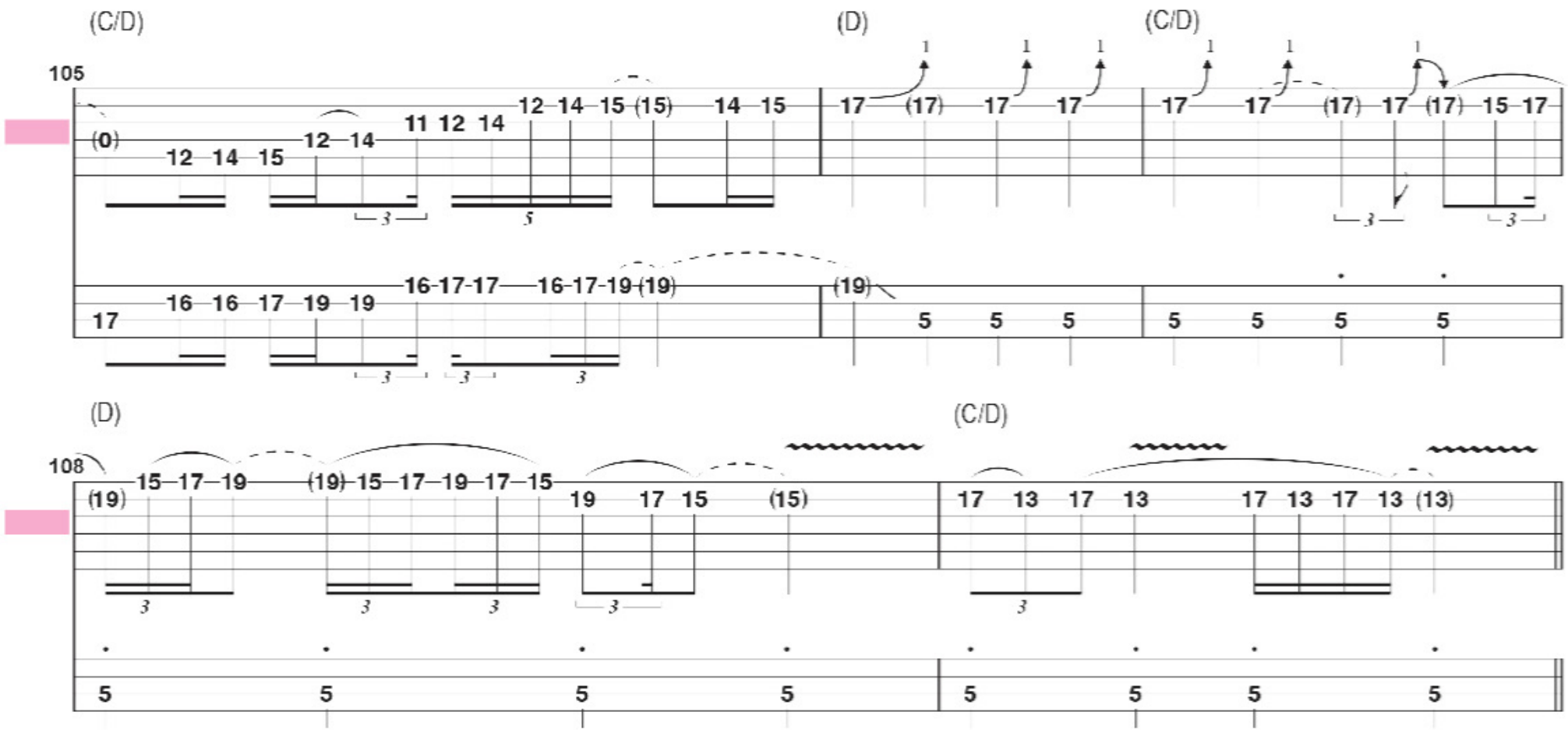


H 1st Verse (2:27)

(♩ = 127)

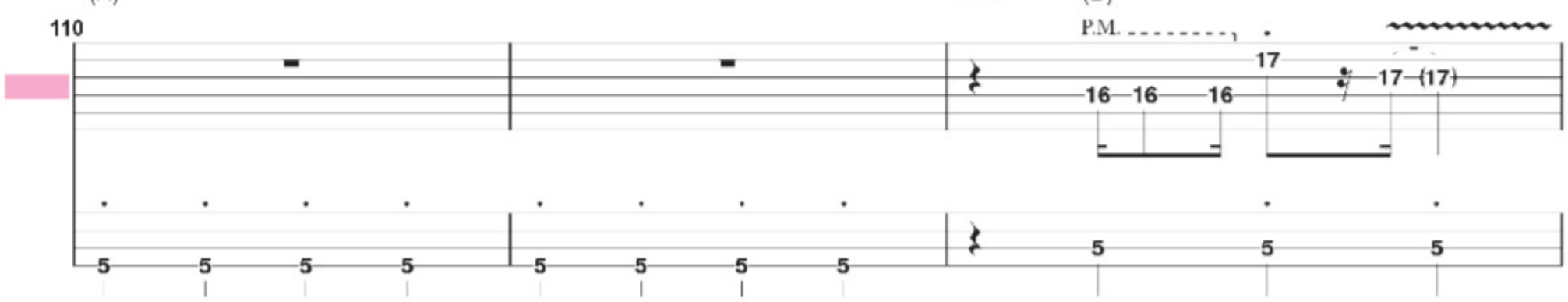


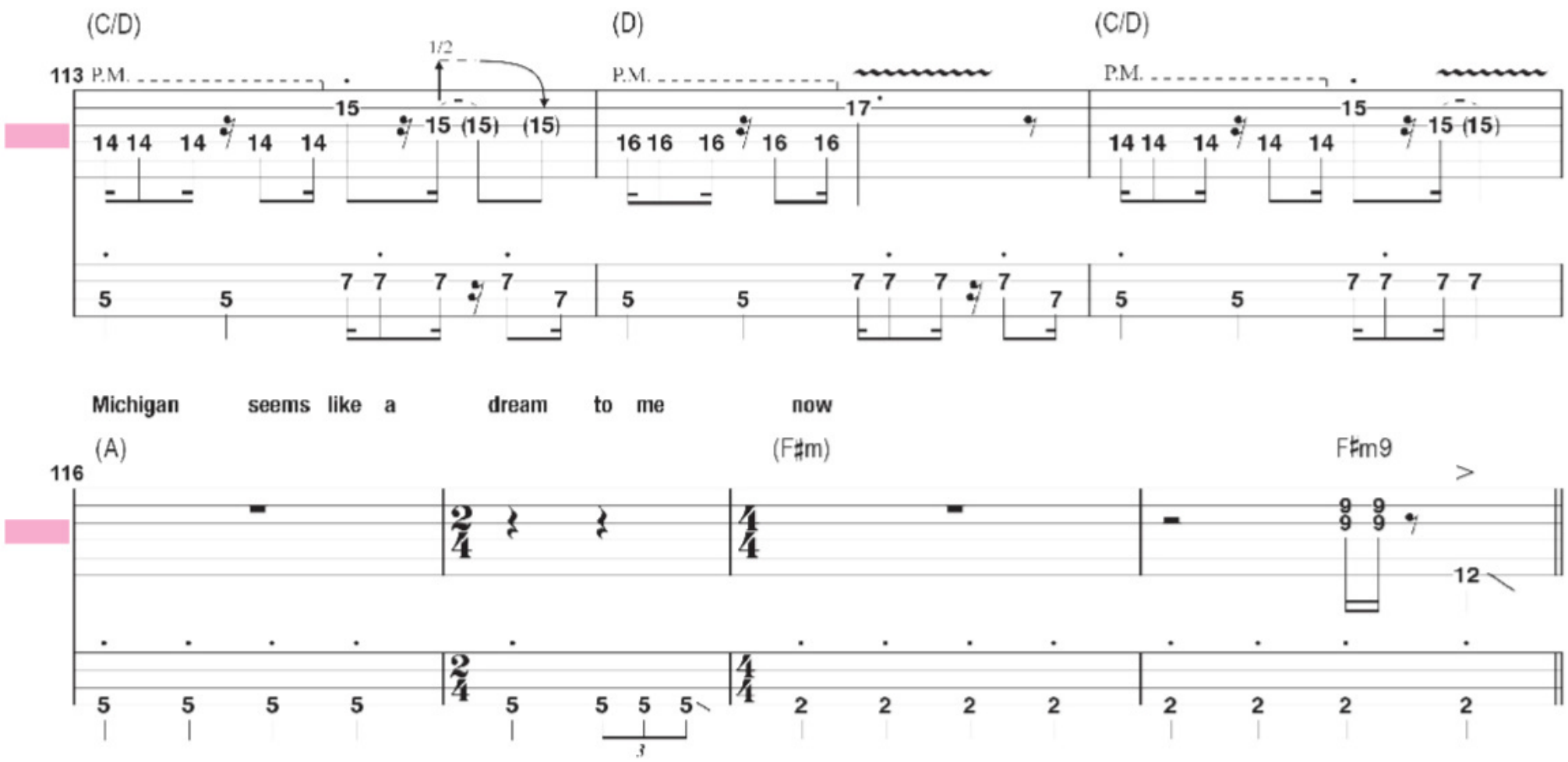

I've got some real estate in my bag
(A)
(F♯m)
F♯m9
C♯m9
89
So we bought a pack of cigarettes and Mrs. Wagner's pies and
F♯m9
C♯m9
N.C. (F♮)
93
walked off walked off walked off to look for America
B A E5 A E5 A
N.C. (F♯m)
97
(3:06)
(D)
(C/D)
(D)
102
*Chords played by organ



J **2nd Verse** (3:21)

Kathy I said as we boarded the Greyhound in Pittsburgh





K 1st Chorus (3:39)

(♩ = 122)

Took four days to hitchhike from Saginaw All gone to look for America

E B5 E5 B5

120

(E/B) (B) (E5/B) (B5)

*Overall harmony

All gone to look for America

E5/B G♯5 C♯m B E5 B

124

(E5/B) (G♯m/B) (C♯m) (B/F♯) (E5/F♯) (B/F♯)

E/G♯ G♯m C♯m D

128

*Use volume pedal or guitar's volume knob to create volume swells in quarter-note rhythm.

L (4:01)

(♩ = 116)

Laughing on the bus playing games with the faces

A

132

let ring

She said the man in the gabardine suite was a spy

(D/F♯) (F♯5/E) (Bm/D) (A)

136

(grad. decrease tempo)

I said be careful his bow tie is really a camera

(D) (F♯5/E) (Bm) (E) (A) (A/G♯) (F♯m)

140

M (4:26)

(♩ = 90)

D G D G D

144

(D/A) (G/A) (D/A)

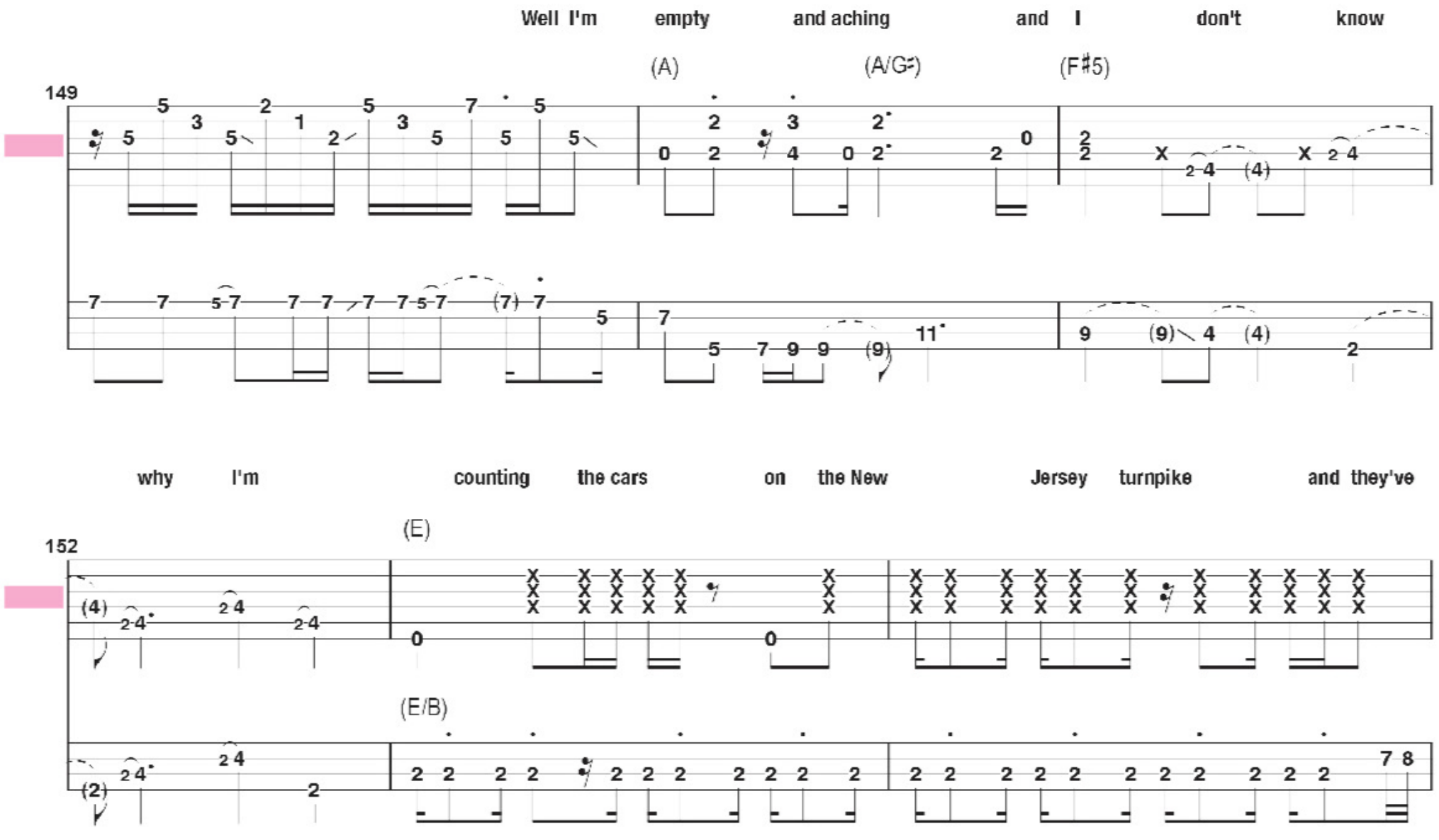
N 3rd Verse (4:32)

Kathy I'm lost I said although I knew she was sleeping

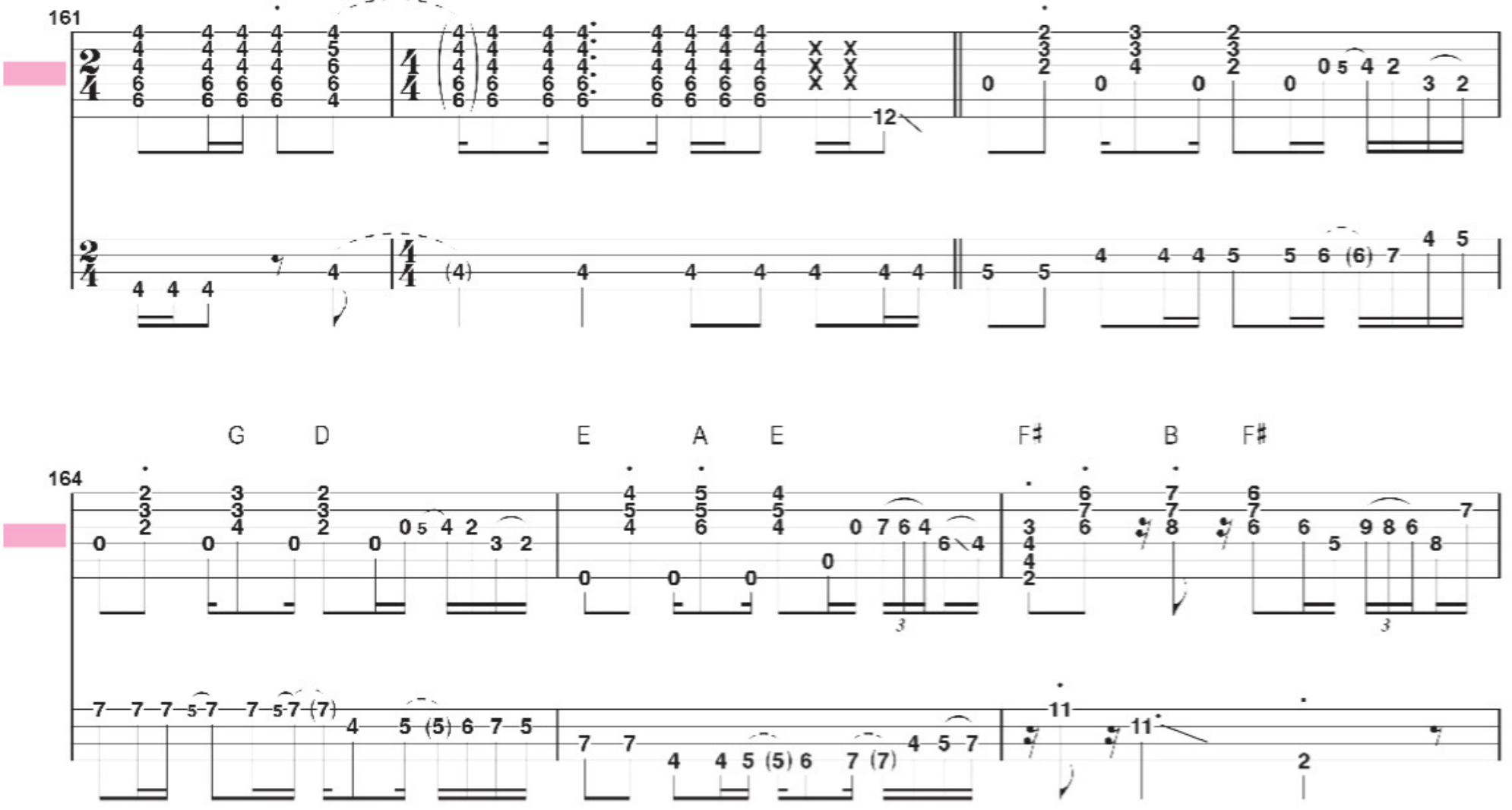
(A) (A/G♯) (A/F♯) (A/E) (D) (G/D) (D) D7

(w/pick and fingers)

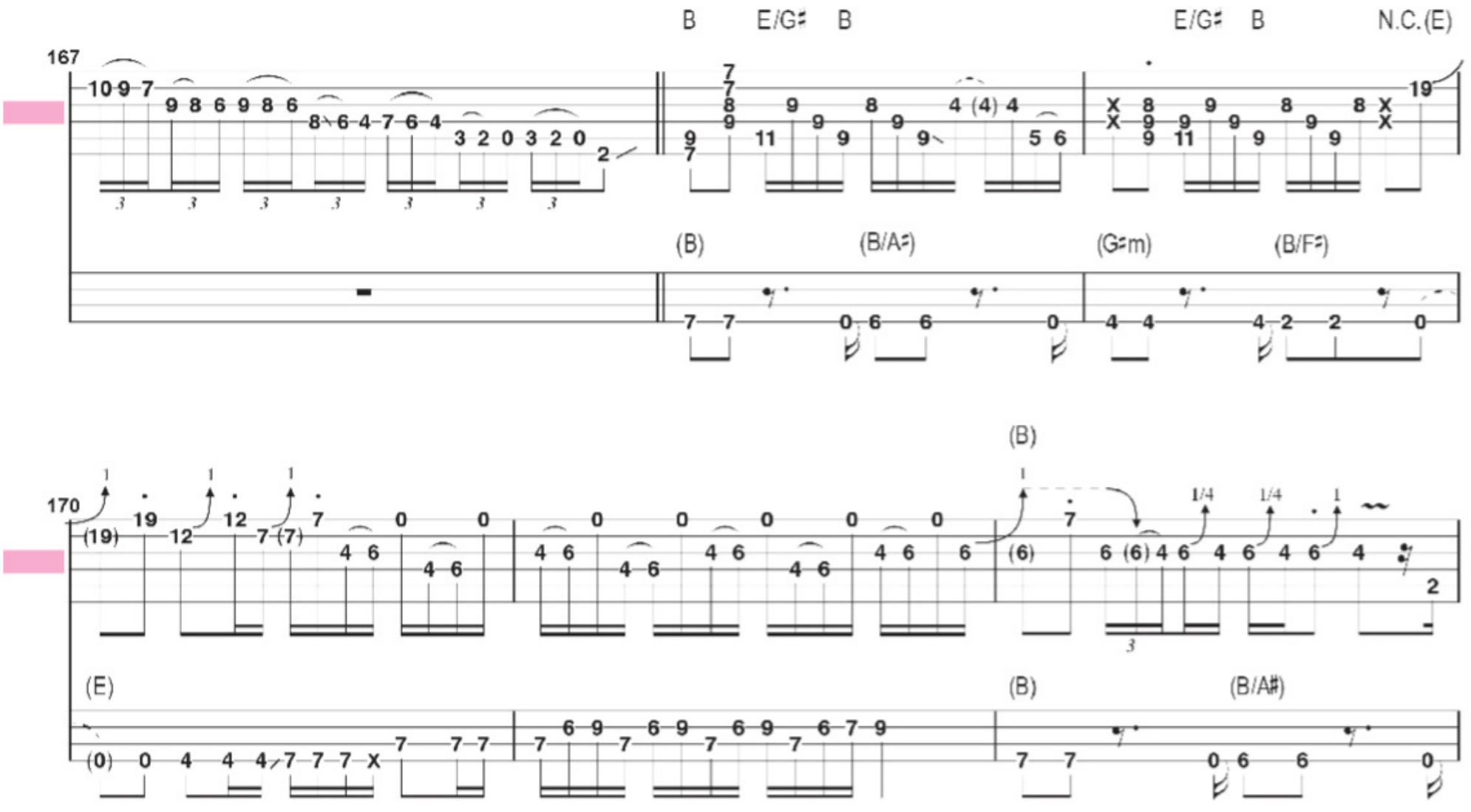
146

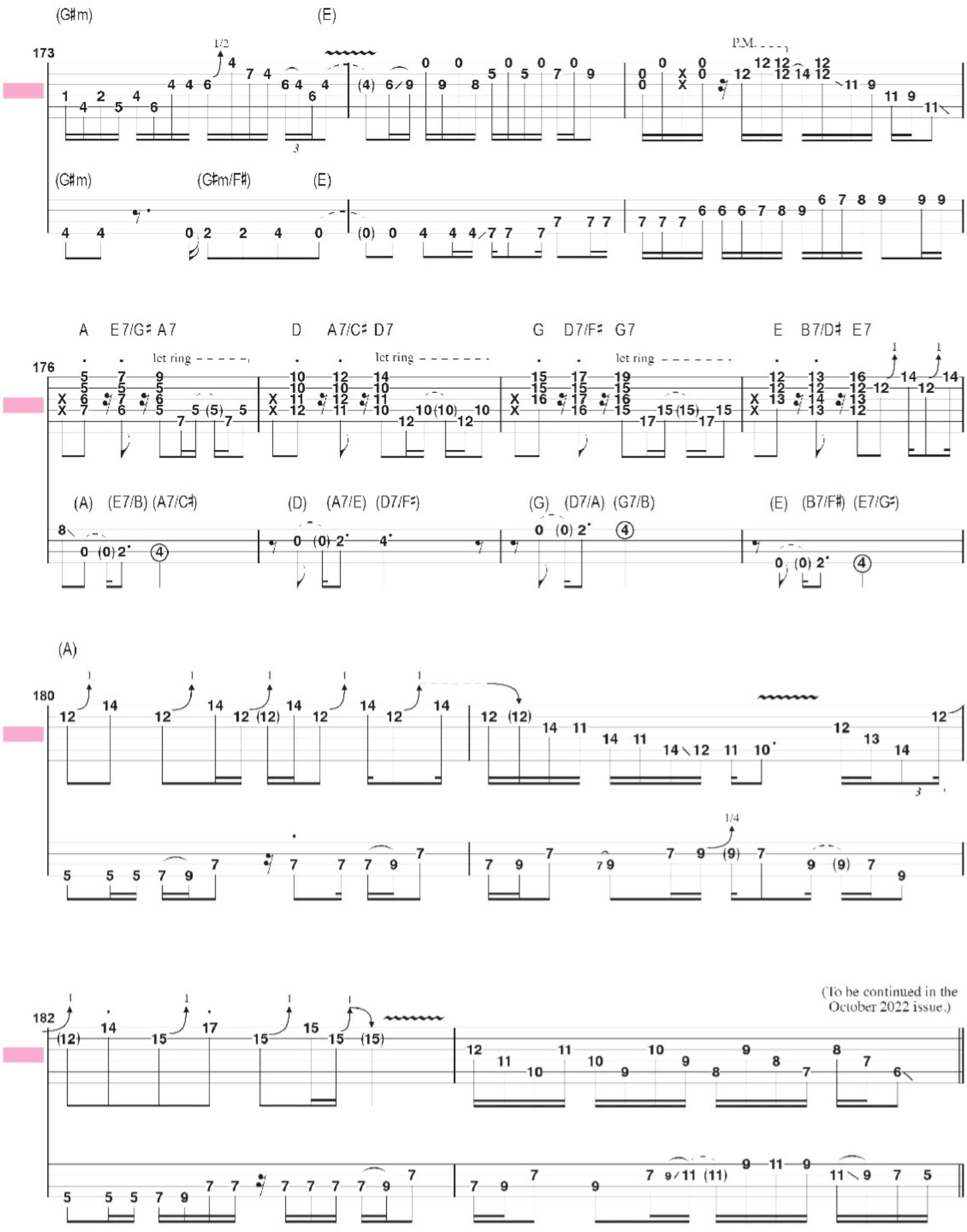

Well I'm empty and aching and I don't know
(A) (A/G♯) (F♯5)
149
why I'm counting the cars on the New Jersey turnpike and they've
(E)
152
(E/B)
all gone to look for America
B E/G♯ B E/G♯ G♯m C♯m
155
(B) (E/B) (B) (E/B)
All gone to look for America
B E/G♯ B Emaj7
158
(B/F♯) (E/F♯) (B/F♯) (Emaj7/B)

O (5:15)



P Guitar Solo (5:28)




(G♯m)
(E)
173
1/2
P.M.
(G♯m)
(G♯m/F♯)
(E)
A E7/G♯ A7
D A7/C♯ D7
G D7/F♯ G7
E B7/D♯ E7
176
let ring
let ring
let ring
(A) (E7/B) (A7/C♯)
(D) (A7/E) (D7/F♯)
(G) (D7/A) (G7/B)
(E) (B7/F♯) (E7/G♯)
(A)
180
1/4
182
(To be continued in the October 2022 issue.)

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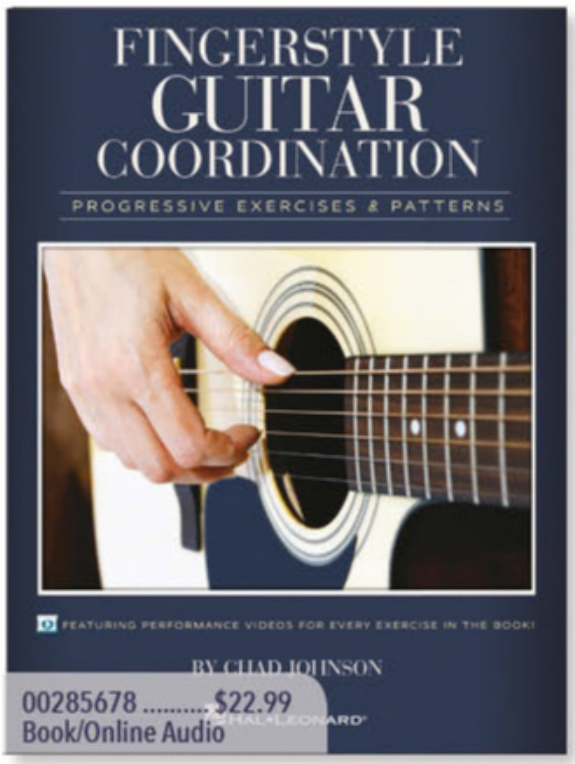

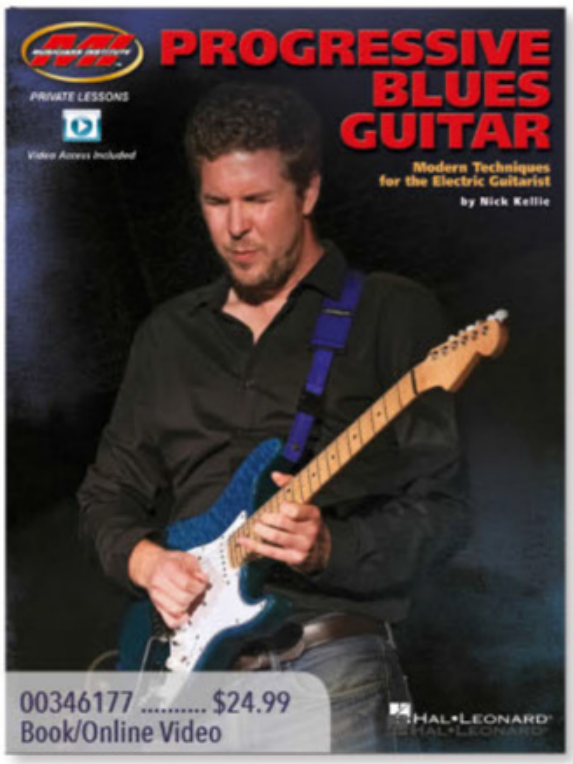

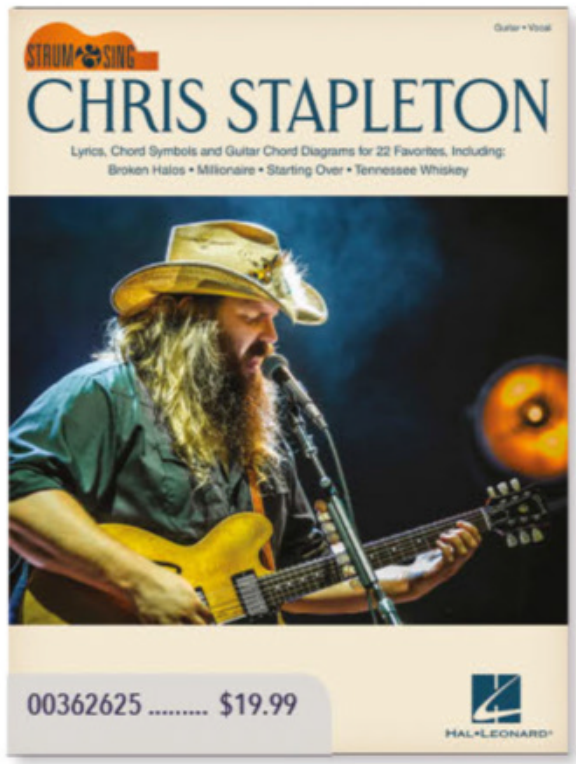

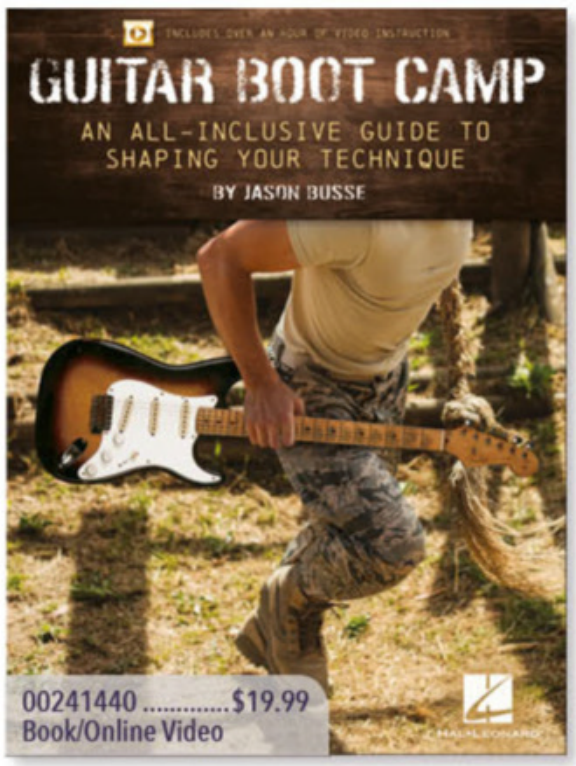

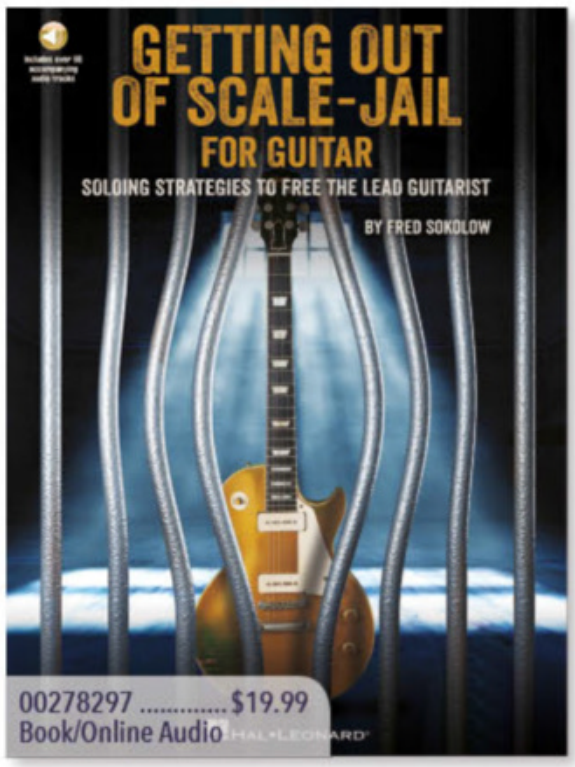

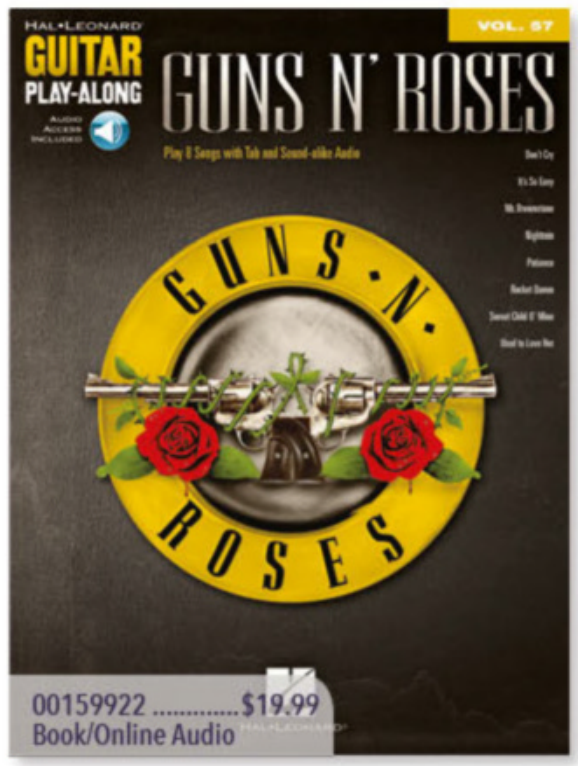

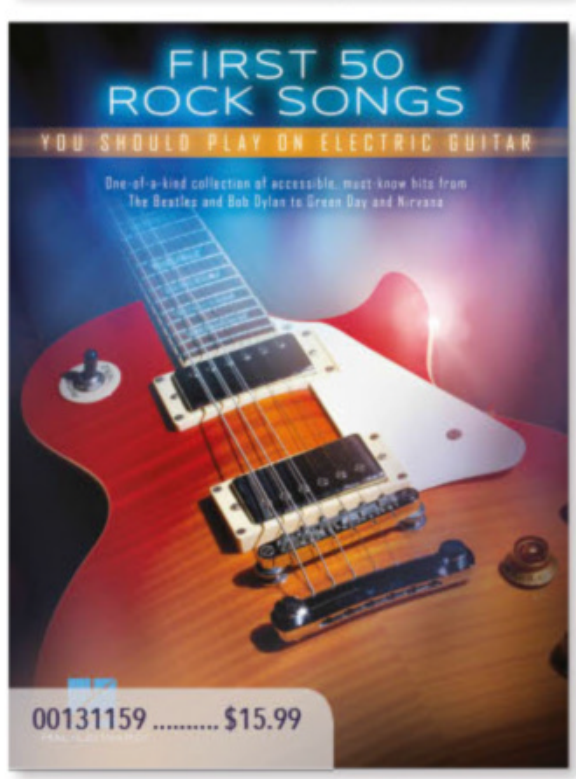

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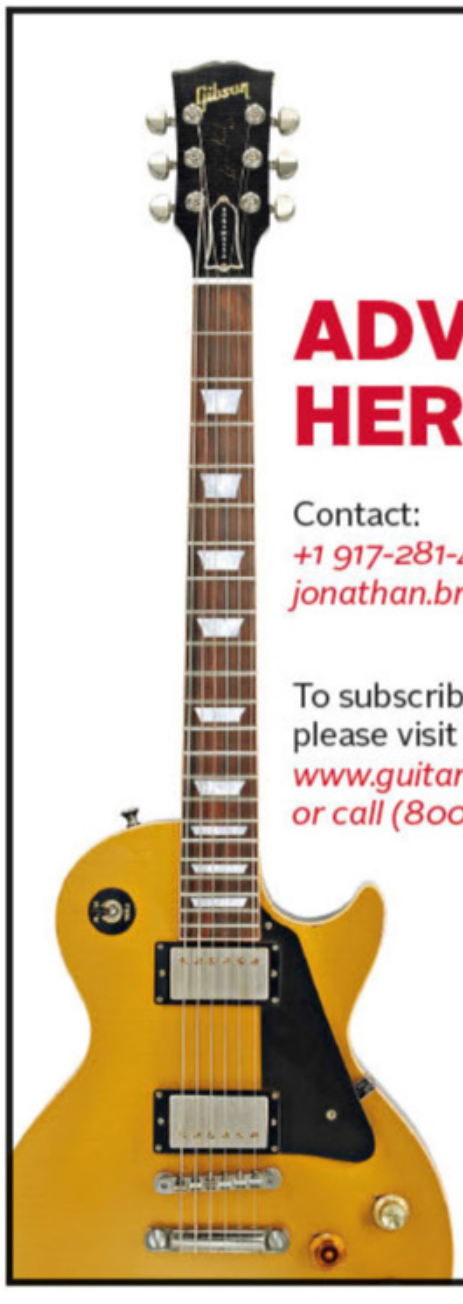

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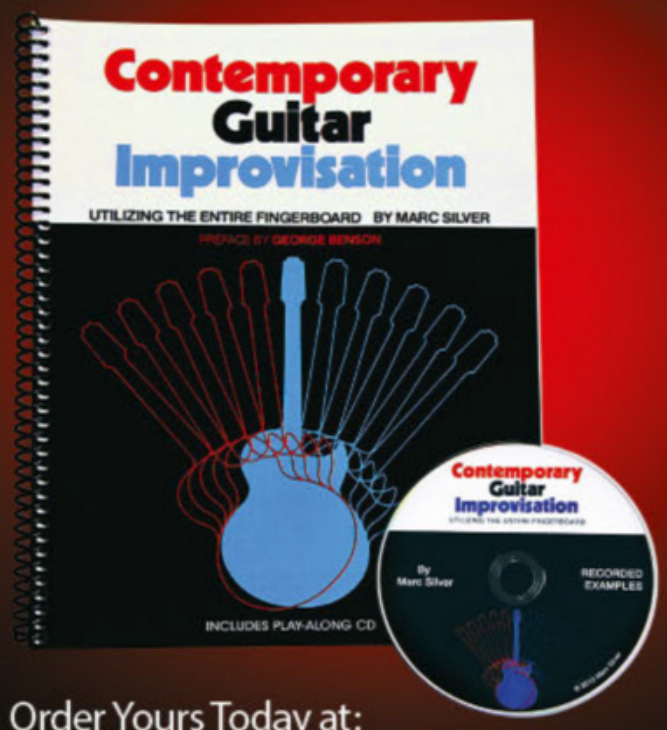

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BY CHRIS GILL

C. 1969-81 HIWATT DR103

CATEGORY: AMPLIFIER HEAD

HIWATT AMPS OFTEN are categorized along with Marshall and Vox as being representative of the "British sound," but in reality a Hiwatt sounds as different from a Marshall or a Vox as those two brands sound compared to a Fender. Hiwatt really belongs in its own distinct category, as the amps that the company produced from the late Sixties through the early Eighties under the direction of founder Dave Reeves have a signature tonal personality that few amps have matched since then.

Many players describe the Hiwatt sound as being "clean" or "hi-fi," but that's telling only a part of the story. The Who's Pete Townshend is known for being one of Hiwatt's biggest supporters, yet his most famous Hiwatt guitar tones, recorded during the Who's performances at the 1969 Woodstock festival and the concert albums *Live at Leeds* and *Live at the Isle of Wight Festival* (both recorded in 1970), are notable for their aggressive overdrive. Hiwatt's 100-watt DR103 head is responsible for many classic recorded overdrive tones, from Ron Wood's gritty raunch on the Faces' "Stay with Me" to the punch and crunch of Brian James' punky power chords on the Damned's 1977 debut album.

Several details influence a Hiwatt amp's unique tonal character. The circuit's fixed-bias phase inverter, which contributes to the amp's impressive clean headroom, plays a major role, as does the distinctive tone stack, which is placed early in the signal chain and as a result provides a wide range of tones that consistently maintain exceptional detail and clarity. Hiwatt amps were built to military specifications with components soldered to turret boards and wiring extremely neatly arranged with 90-degree angle bends, and the parts were high-quality and robust, including Partridge transformers and Mullard "mustard" capacitors and tubes.

Most tube amps produce compressed, distorted tones when turned all the way up, but when the volume controls on a 100-watt Hiwatt DR103 are maxed the attack stays percussive and articulate, and residual noise is almost non-existent. The tonal clarity and wide frequency range makes a Hiwatt an ideal platform for players who use pedals as well as guitarists who prefer to shift from overdrive crunch to shimmering clean tones by backing down the guitar's volume knob. *Live at Leeds* is a textbook example of this, as Townshend frequently transitions from the roar of his Univox Super Fuzz to acoustic guitar-like sounds on quieter passages.

Although Hiwatt amps are not as ubiquitous on rock recordings as Vox or Marshall, the list of users and classic albums is quite impressive. Notable examples include David Gilmour (on Pink Floyd's Seventies recordings), Robert Fripp (early King Crimson), Pete Ham and Joey Molland with Badfinger, Roger Fisher (Heart's first albums), Alex Lifeson (live and studio late Seventies), Lindsey Buckingham (*Fleetwood Mac* and *Rumours*) and Martin Barre (Jethro Tull, late Sixties and early Seventies). While Hiwatt is best known as a guitar amp, some of the most gnarly and aggressive bass tones known to mankind were recorded using Hiwatts by players that include John Entwistle, Tom Petersson (Cheap Trick), Glenn Hughes (Deep Purple), John Wetton (King Crimson), Greg Lake and J.J. Burnel (the Stranglers).

SUGGESTED SETTINGS

PETE TOWNSHEND

Classic Pete: Brilliant channel input, **Brilliant volume**: 10, **Bass**: 3, **Treble**: 8, **Middle**: 10, **Presence**: 0, **Master Volume**: 8

Tip: *Pete's custom Hiwatts didn't have Mid or Presence controls, but these settings come close to the custom circuit's tonal personality. Use a solidbody with P-90 single coils and stand back.*

DAVID GILMOUR

Classic Gilmour lead: Normal **Volume**: 7, **Brilliant Volume**: 4.5, **Bass**: 6, **Treble**: 5, **Middle**: 4, **Presence**: 6, **Master Volume**: 5

Tip: *Use an ABY pedal or Y-cable to link both channels together, and plug a Strat-style guitar to a fuzz or distortion pedal with smooth, singing character (like a Ram's Head Big Muff).*

The Hiwatt high jump: Pete Townshend on stage with the Who in 1971

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